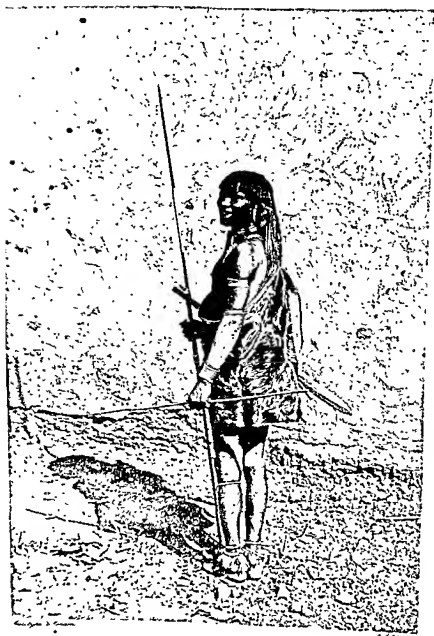


WITH A PREHISTORIC PEOPLE



# WITH A PREHISTORIC PEOPLE

*The Akikuyu of British East Africa*

BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF  
THE METHOD OF LIFE AND MODE OF THOUGHT  
FOUND EXISTENT AMONGST A NATION ON ITS  
FIRST CONTACT WITH EUROPEAN CIVILISATION

BY

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AND

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(BORN PEASE)

SOM. COLL.(OXON); M.A.(TRIN COLL., DUBLIN)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

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TO  
EDWARD B. TYLOR, D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S.  
LATELY PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

9

THIS SMALL CONTRIBUTION  
TO A GREAT SUBJECT  
IS  
BY HIS PERMISSION  
DEDICATED



## PREFACE

---

IN August 1902 I found myself by accident among the A-ki-kú-yu people of British East Africa.

The country so named is, it is perhaps needless to explain, part of that which has fallen to our share in the general division of the African Continent between nations of Europe. It had been nominally taken over by the Foreign Office in 1895, but British rule over the greater proportion was as yet on paper only. At the time of my arrival the railway, which had been constructed from the coast, had just reached its terminus, Lake Victoria Nyanza. The traveller who wished to reach the heart of the Ki-kú-yu country then, as now, traversed the line for about half of its length, and left it at Nairóbi. He there put his goods on porters' backs, and travelled thence some sixty miles to the north-east till he reached Fort Hall, which had then been recently established as the first station of the province of Kénia. The Fort consisted of a rough stone building, enclosed for purposes of defence by a wall of loose stones, and a ditch some twelve feet wide.

The province was, at the time I speak of, practically unknown and its people unsubdued: except for a few fixed points, it had no boundaries even.

To reduce and control this vast area Mr. Sidney Hinde had lately been appointed, with the title of sub-commissioner. Under him he had at first but two young white assistants, Mr. Hemstead and Mr. R. W. Humphery. In the face of

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often heartbreaking difficulties and discouragements these three gentlemen achieved results of which they each have good cause to be proud. From them all I received the greatest help and kindness, but more especially from Mr and Mrs Hinde. Later on more junior officers were given to the sub-commissioner, and he was thus able to establish a station at Ny er' : He placed Mr C W Neligan in charge of it. As it happened to be near to my fixed camp, I saw a great deal of Mr Neligan, and I am particularly indebted to him for much help and hospitality<sup>1</sup>.

To give an example of the way in which territory was gradually brought under control I will quote the following instance. Soon after my arrival at Fort Hall, to which I travelled with the sub-commissioner, returning from leave to take up his command, three native elders came to see him and to tell him that the people of their district were prepared to accept "The (White Man's) Government" and that therefore they would not oppose its orders by force of arms. These three old men had, they said, started a company of five, but that two of their number had been killed on the road by fellow tribesmen of another district which was opposed to submission to the white man. Mr Hinde received the survivors cordially, explained at great length to them what the advent of the white man meant, gave them presents, and dismissed them. Not one of the three ever reached home. They were all murdered *en route* by those who were opposed to their mission.

On the news coming in, the leading men of the guilty district were summoned to the Fort. They came without hesitation or mistrust. The sub-commissioner then explained to them that "the Government" would not permit the murder of its friends or sanction the misdeeds that were constantly

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was printed I have heard of the death of this popular young District Officer to my very great regret.

occurring, and that they must now either surrender the murderers and pay a heavy fine in cattle, or accept war. A date was fixed for compliance, and the futility of resistance to the power of "the Government" was clearly pointed out to them, and they were told to go home and think it well over.

Failing compliance in such a case, some five hundred of the Masai tribe, the hereditary enemies of the Akikuyu, would then be summoned, and with the addition of some regular native troops and police the country would be scoured. The men were killed, and the women, children, and herds taken captive until such time as, experience having been dearly bought, another meeting procured the requisite submission. The indemnity exacted from the natives usually consisted in part of the making of roads, the first object of the Government in a newly acquired territory being to make it accessible, so that troops may be readily moved backwards and forwards through it for the purpose of preserving order. Such a road consists of a track about twelve feet wide, from which the tussock grass has been cut away. The Akikuyu share with the majority of native races an intense dislike to the coming of a road, being shrewd enough to see all that its presence conveys, and never themselves make a visible track if it can be avoided. They are, however, very expert at thus making a path, one man seizing the tussock by its top, whilst another chops the roots with the tip of his sword. The cleared track was carried as far as feasible along high ground, as the possibility of a native rising at any time was not forgotten.

As part of the work of thus bringing the country under control, a new station was formed at Ny er' i, some thirty miles to the northward of Fort Hall. I was present at the selection of the site, and obtained and entrenched a small plot of ground in the neighbourhood. The buildings I put up were a rough stone room for photographic work, and what are known as bandas, large erections, resembling barns, with thatched roofs

and open sides, underneath which tents can be pitched and goods stored

As I looked northward from my door there was nothing but wilderness between me and Abyssinia. Lions were not infrequent visitors and rhinoceros abounded. I once counted up as many as thirty as having been killed to my own knowledge, within a radius of a mile of a point near my fixed camp.

Using this little homestead as a depot, and availing myself of Mr. Hinde's permission and advice, I travelled about the country shooting, photographing, collecting and taking notes, and not only never on any occasion had any serious trouble with the natives, but, on the contrary, became great friends with various influential men over a wide extent of country. In particular, the younger and only brother of one of the principal chiefs became my inseparable companion. He was an especially bright, attractive lad of about seventeen, widely known and universally popular, and by him I was chaperoned in Kikuyu society. Where he could not introduce me himself, as in the case of certain rites, his influence was such that I always found myself committed to the care of an influential sponsor.

Much information regarding native custom was gathered from my various retainers during long rides and shooting expeditions about the country, when the conversation naturally turned on the objects around us, but the most fruitful season was in the evening when I made it a practice to have a big fire in front of my tent and every one was welcome. They sat around it in order of social consideration talking amongst themselves. I presently joined in the conversation, perhaps asking a question and so inducing one man to give an explanation which would be corrected and amplified by the others. In this manner I also got in touch with local gossip, and learnt what was going on in the neighbourhood—festivals, dances, markets and the like. Invitations would be

given and expeditions made to be present, and these in their turn opened out "fresh fields and pastures new"

Going to England for a while in 1904, I again returned, this time with a wife, and on presenting my native friends to her she found them so interesting that she devoted herself to gathering information in directions that I had passed over, for doing which she was particularly favourably placed. Hence the following pages may be taken as dealing with matter carefully collected and noted with a special view to accuracy. They extend over a period of some five and a half years in all, between two and three of which were spent in intimate touch with the Akikuyu.

The methods of collecting information were much the same, during the later visit as those already described, but it was in addition possible for my wife to visit among the huts and thus come in touch with the women and domestic life.

The language employed was Swahili. This is, as is well known, the tongue of the Swahili people, a coast race springing from the union of Arabs and native tribes. It has been carried by them into the interior on their trading and slave raiding expeditions, and forms the *lingua franca* of this part of Africa. We each found, soon after arrival, that although our own knowledge of it made no pretence of being grammatical there was with care no barrier to communication with the natives, more especially in the case of those with whom we were in daily intercourse. Our upper servants were Swahilis but they had in many cases been much with the Akikuyu, and spoke their language. A few of the younger Akikuyu have picked up Swahili and whenever we found such an one, he was immediately engaged for some small office, such as carrying a camera or rifle which made him one of our regular retinue and brought him into constant touch with ourselves. Thus, though frequently each party was speaking

a foreign language, we gained the advantage of being able to dispense with an interpreter. Pains were however, especially taken to guard against misunderstanding as a possible source of error, all information being, for instance, re stated by us and subjected to correction. It was also checked in other ways in order to ensure as great accuracy as possible. *For communication with the older men and with the women* we were obliged to rely on the services of interpreters, a disability we shared with every Government official who has been in the province in our day. Our servants, however, who acted in this capacity were accustomed to our ways, and intelligently interested in what we desired to know.

A list of those native friends who more especially gave us assistance is appended, that as much idea as possible may be gained of the value of the evidence. Great care was taken to avoid leading questions, or in any way suggesting an answer expected. No payment was ever given for information as such, except in one or two instances where folk stories only were concerned.

The information asked for was in almost every instance given readily, and often with considerable intelligence. Every position has its advantages and drawbacks, but a gain in certain directions undoubtedly arose from the absence of all connection with officialdom and hut tax on the one hand, or with religious propaganda on the other. It is unnecessary, however to say to any one with experience in dealing with natives or even with our fellow countrymen of the uneducated classes that under the most favourable circumstances it is often difficult and arduous work to arrive at a straightforward and clear understanding of such facts as we desired to learn. Our practice was to obtain information regarding any subject from as many independent sources as possible. The various statements thus made often appeared at first hopelessly contradictory. When not unfrequently, after considerable

trouble, a satisfactory grouping of facts seemed almost to have been arrived at, some new statement was made or fact transpired, in view of which the whole carefully constructed edifice tumbled into ruins. The difficulty arose in part from the fact that there are undoubtedly variations of customs in different districts, but it would have been rash to assume that this was always its explanation. The natives we found, though he might occasionally desire to throw us off the trail, as for instance in the matter of iron working, and of the ceremony of the second birth, rarely, if ever, gave us information which was incorrect, still less did he intend to mislead us. The uncivilised man, however, naturally finds it almost impossible to look from the outside at facts or customs which to him are second nature. The rule is thus given without the exception, the exception without the rule, and accidental circumstance confused with primary necessity. For example, much of the difficulty found in arriving at the qualifications necessary for a ruling "Elder," arose through the use of the word "M'wan' gi" as if it were an official title, whereas it in reality signifies merely a member of the older generation. There was in another case entirely contradictory evidence as to whether a man who "inherits" his father's wives becomes their guardian or their actual possessor. The solution proved to be that the son may not take in marriage either the first, second, or third wife of his late father, to these he stands in the position of guardian the fourth or any other wife of the deceased he may properly add to his own household. Such is, however, an unusually large establishment, and cases of this sort would not always have come to the knowledge of our younger informants.

In this way when once the key is gained, the inquirer glances back through his list of confused notes, which at one time looked so hopeless and the whole becomes clear.

It should also be borne in mind by the anthropological

critic who "sits at home at ease," that for the spade work of the science, the authorities, as well as the students, are human, and must be taken in their own time and way. An opportunity missed, because the student is tired or out of humour, will not occur again. On the other hand, the inquiry often has to be dropped when it is most interesting and productive, because the informant is becoming bored and, childlike, needs a change of occupation. The books cannot be taken out of the shelves and restored to them at will.

These pages make no pretence of being an exhaustive treatise on the Akikúyu. The subject of the language has been adequately dealt with by Mr McGregor in his Dictionary and Grammar, and only a few unusual and technical words are here given. No detailed study has been attempted with regard to the physical characteristics of the people. Their origin and clan organisation have been but lightly touched upon and remarks on these matters must be regarded as tentative. Arrangements had been made for further research but other work arose towards the end of our sojourn in Africa and they had to our very keen regret to be abandoned.

While all pains have been taken that such information as has been given shall be accurate it is obvious that its reliability must vary. The value of the evidence has as far as possible been made clear in the text. There are some matters on which it is possible to speak from our own definite knowledge and observation such as handicrafts, certain religious ceremonies and events of a like nature. In other cases as for example various social customs the evidence is of such a nature that its general correctness may, we think, be relied on. In addition statements are also included which are believed at least to contain truth and which it would have been a misfortune to leave unchronicled but which in the time at our disposal it was impossible altogether to verify. The very obviousness of these and other deficiencies



will, we trust, make easier the path of future labourers in a field which is well-nigh inexhaustible

It is essential to recollect that the districts described are but a small part of the country occupied by the Akikuyu. Even in these districts there is considerable divergency in practice and custom, according to locality and clan, hence it may certainly be concluded that, when other areas come to be carefully examined, yet greater differences will be found.<sup>1</sup> Until a mass of accurate data, drawn from every part of this at present little-known country, has been collected, it is obvious that generalisations on any point connected with these people must be regarded as premature

The great interest of the subject lies in the fact that the Akikuyu of to day are, in their civilisation and methods, at the point where our ancestors stood in earliest times. Present at trial<sup>2</sup> by ordeal, the life of our Saxon forefathers becomes a living reality, watching the potmaker and the smith, the hand of the clock is put back yet farther, and the dead of Britain's tumult go once more about their daily avocations

W SCORESBY ROUTLEDGE

My husband has made clear in the previous pages how the information contained in this book came to be collected some explanation seems due for its publication

I frequently induced my native friends to give me information by telling them that "when we were back in England the white women would wish me to tell them about the women of Kikuyu, for we all now belonged to the same great white Chief" It is believed that some account of these thousands of our new fellow-subjects, whose destiny now lies in the

<sup>1</sup> I am informed that a change has recently been made in the Government regulations by which as stated in the text, certain districts were closed to civilians

hands of the British Parliament, may not be without interest to some at any rate of the British people

It is also hoped that the information given may possibly prove of use to the newcomer, whether traveller or official, in the district described. Opportunity or inclination may often prevent the acquisition of such knowledge, and the results of ignorance be lamentable

While the main object of this book may thus be said to be popular, certain of the information held in it was collected from a more purely scientific point of view. Anthropology is a study as yet but little known. For a hundred educated persons who have sympathetic understanding of the evolution of species, there is but one who has given thought to the further story which concerns itself with man's conquest over nature, the gradual development of his social powers, and his religious thought. The explanation of this indifference may perhaps be found in the fact that the science is in many directions in its infancy. The data are still being collected, the stage of assured deduction is hardly yet reached.

If the Kikuyu nation is to contribute their share to the working out of these great problems, the need for exact and full record of native habit and custom is urgent. At the beginning of the time covered by these investigations a white man was in many parts a thing unknown. To day it is difficult to discover the original mode of government and the shields borne by native boys preparing for tribal initiation are decorated with "Reckitts' Blue."

An apology is due for the fact that my own share of the work was undertaken purely through interest of circumstances, and apart from some slight knowledge of our own early constitution without any technical knowledge. We were also removed from almost all access to literature. Whilst this was in many ways to be regretted, it was felt on our return to civilisation that under the circumstances the wisest method

was to proceed on the same lines in dealing with the matter collected. All reference to books on the subject was therefore sedulously avoided until these notes had been cast in their final form. They have therefore, at least, this advantage, that they are a record of independent observation and unbiased by the theories of others.

With two diverse objects in view, the popular and scientific, a certain difficulty has arisen in the preparation of the pages which follow. The general reader naturally desires what may be termed an "impressionist" view of native life. The scientist, in his armchair at home, clamours for as numerous and accurate details as possible, whether their immediate relevance to any point at issue is or is not obvious.

An attempt to solve the problem by relegating lengthy detail to the Appendix, has not proved feasible. It is therefore necessary to rely, not without considerable confidence, on the discerning power of the reader to skip those parts which to him personally are not of interest. From this aspect a certain amount of repetition, which occurred in the original essays, has been allowed to remain, in order that each subject may be comprehensible on its own account.

In dealing with nomenclature, an English word has always been preferred to a Kikúyu, where the meaning is identical. Where the Kikúyu and English terms represent in the main the same idea, but with a certain difference of meaning, such as N'gai and God, N'gó-ma and Spirit, the two are employed interchangeably. The use of the native word alone is in such cases apt to be confusing to all but the most conscientious reader, while that of the English term itself is somewhat misleading.

Swahili words have been employed in only a very few instances, where, as explained elsewhere, they have passed into common use amongst Europeans.

In this family of languages, words are inflected at the beginning and not at the end, thus, M'ki-ku yu (singular) makes A-ki ku yu (plural)

In all native words and names the Geographical System of spelling has been followed in this the consonants are sounded as in English, and the vowels as in Italian No hard- and fast ~~rule~~ has been followed in the form of presentation of words, it has been thought that the interests of the reader will be usually best consulted by dividing these into their component syllables and noting the accentuation, but this practice has been abandoned where a word very frequently recurs, and its constant repetition in this manner might seem unnecessary and pedantic

With regard to the responsibility for the collection of material, speaking generally, my husband's observations were those which dealt with dress, ornaments, and the arts and crafts of life, that is, the greater portion of Part I, my own, those appertaining to the women, and to social and political life, contained in Part II On the difficult subject of religion, Part III, we each made notes or attended ceremonies as seemed feasible The folk tales were obtained by me in the time left at my disposal during his shooting or other expeditions

It is obvious that there are certain drawbacks, from the reader's point of view, associated with this dual authorship, and the consequent change of personality in the writers especially in Part III These it has been sought to reduce as far as possible, but in certain cases it is, as will be seen, impossible to dissociate the description of events witnessed or the account of a conversation held, from the individuality of the recorder

It is to be hoped that there may also be corresponding advantages derived from the impressions of two observers approaching similar topics from the different aspects in which

they naturally present themselves to the minds of a man and a woman.

When the best has been done that the circumstances have rendered possible, the writer sits down under the feeling, not only of many scientific shortcomings, but also of the impossibility of conveying between the covers of any book that sensation of rest and space and freedom, of in some mysterious way, "coming once more to one's own," which springs from daily and nightly intercourse with nature and with nature's children. It may be that such a sense arises from half unconscious recollection of our days of childhood, or it may be that it comes to us from a time when our forefathers also lived in simple communion with nature, in the childhood of the world.

KATHELINE ROUTLEDGE

WATERSIDE, BURLINGTON, HANTS,  
November 1900

Our most grateful thanks for help given in the preparation of this book are primarily due to Mr A W McGregor of the Church Missionary Society, who has resided amongst the Akikuyu since 1901. He has by his tact and kindness won the confidence of the natives, and is the greatest authority on their language. Mr McGregor found leisure in a busy life to give us invaluable assistance both in East Africa and England.

It is a pleasure also to acknowledge our obligation for help and hospitality to Dr and Mrs Crawford, who are doing excellent work at the Kénya Medical Mission, and who gave us much information.

Mr Hobley, C M G, who has kindly aided us by his interest and advice, has permitted us to reprint a list obtained by him of Kikuyu medicines.

We wish also to thank Dr C H Read, P S A , and Mr T Athol Joyce of the Ethnographical Department of the British Museum To the encouragement and help of Mr Joyce this book owes much

The notes of Mr Marett on the Comparative Study of Religion, add greatly to any interest possessed by our work in this direction

We owe to Dr C S Myers the suggestion that records should be obtained of native music, and he has been good enough to make an analytical study of those we brought back

To Professor Gowland, F R S , A R S M , Professor of Metallurgy at the Royal School of Mines, London, we tender our sincerest thanks for his most valuable note showing the place occupied by Kikuyu iron smelting in the evolution of that art

Whilst this book was in the press Sir Hugh Bell, Bart , offered to place at our disposal a hitherto unpublished sketch and letter by Grant, the colleague of Speke, dealing with native iron working Of this offer we have gratefully availed ourselves

Dr O Stapf of the Kew Herbarium, has most kindly personally looked through a collection of some two hundred and fifty specimens made for it by us He has determined the species of those of more immediate interest the remainder of the collection is now being examined

Mr J Allen Howe and Mr W F P M'Lintock of the British Geological Survey have given us valuable aid by reporting on specimens submitted to them

Our obligations are also due to Mr A J Clifton of Messrs Dalmeyer Limited, not only for arranging a photographic outfit, which proved eminently suitable to the conditions, but also for his kindness in constantly acting as adviser in all matters connected with photography

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

THE following Akikúyu were in our employment and in daily intercourse with us for months together. They all spoke Swahili

WA MA' HU

Brother of the chief Wom bu gu,

WA KANG'-A

Gura River, a constant companion  
Headman for eighteen months over  
all Akikuyu in my service

N'JAR' GE

Son of chief Mun ge With us for  
six months, carried camera

KA NO' HI A WA DU KU'-U

A friend of N'jar'ge, employed as  
personal attendant

KI BAN JU' I WA BAT' I A

From south western Kikuyu—  
specially intelligent

KA BAN'-JA WA KI RA' TU

With me both visits to Kikúyu

KI LAN' GO WA GUN' DU

An orphan picked up as child by my  
man Dosa, employed as assistant  
groom—very shrewd

The foregoing represent six different districts and various clans

The routine of daily travel brought us also into intimate contact with many other of our Kikuyu retainers

The following natives in our employment were not of Kikúyu nationality, but had been long in the country, had in some cases Kikúyu wives, and spoke the language well Their help was often valuable

DO' SA BIN MI SHA' MI

Head groom, an educated Swahili,  
with wide African experience

ALI BIN SHA KU' A

Swahili, personal servant

ALI BIN SALIM

Swahili, personal servant

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LOU DE J. BIN CHA' FIA

My wife a personal attendant, the son  
of a Swahili father by a Masai  
mother, brought up in Kikuyu

Other Míkúyu throughout the country who more especially  
gave us assistance were—

MU'Ō

An important chief whom I had  
known well for some years

KA RU' RI

Another influential chief also well  
known to me

NDU I' NI

A chief My wife on one occasion  
resided near his headquarters

KA ZI' MI

Father of Ndui The above visit  
was paid in order to gather  
information from him

JASH' U' WA KA' RU' RI  
VJO RO' GI

Under instruction by Mr McGregor  
servant to Dr Crawford

This list does not, of course, take into account the numerous  
elders, Medicine Men, artificers in iron and pottery, and other  
natives of Kikuyu with whom we constantly came into contact,  
and who all added in greater or less degree to our knowledge  
of the subject in hand

All the articles figured in this book, with one exception,  
together with others, have been accepted from us by the  
British Museum Particular attention is called to a series  
which will there be found that illustrates, step by step the  
method of making a primitive pot

The following Swahili terms for which there is no English  
equivalent, have been employed throughout, rather than the  
corresponding words in Kikuyu they having passed into  
common use among Europeans in East Africa —

ASKARI OR ASIKARI  
MALI OR MALI

An armed retainer  
Compensation paid to the family of a  
girl by her intended husband for  
the loss of her services.

SHAMBA  
SHAURI

A cultivated plot of ground  
Discussion also the result arrived at  
an agreement



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*Sketch K R*

ABERDARE RANGE  
From north of Nyeri

## INTRODUCTION

### THE COMING OF THE A-KI-KÚ-YU

THE great area occupied by the A-ki-kú-yu, or people of Ki-kú-yu,<sup>1</sup> is still imperfectly known. The British Government has not hitherto been able to reduce the whole of it to submission, and the civilian is not yet allowed to penetrate the eastern and northern districts. The portion of it dealt with in the following pages lies in the highlands, about 6000 ft. above the sea. The northern boundary coincides, as nearly as possible, with the Equator, but owing to its elevation the climate is temperate. The sun has tropical power, but is frequently veiled in mist, and the nights are cool. On the south lie the plains of Athi, through which runs the railway, and which the traveller gradually leaves behind him as he enters the hills. On the west the mountains known to the white man as the Aberdare Range, with the peak of Ki-nan-g'op, remain untouched by man, and formed till lately an outlet to the Akkúyu for an ever-increasing population, and a bulwark on that side against their neighbours, and therefore their enemies; the Masai. On the east the great mass of Kē-ny-a, still in its primitive state, rises to a height of over 17,000 ft., and dominates Kikúyu. Its proportions are not of remarkable beauty. The base is large in relation to the whole, and it rises above its surroundings somewhat like a giant ant-hill, but the summit is crowned by a striking mass of sharp jagged

<sup>1</sup> Possible derivation—K, locative, *Kuyu* fig-tree = country of fig-trees

rocks, which, standing out amidst glaciers and perpetual snow, make a strong appeal to the imagination. The time to see Kénýa at its best is in early morning or towards evening. At those times clouds frequently veil the base, and the summit is bathed in the purple mist of dawn, or lit up with glorious colours of sunset. But Kénýa, whether beautiful or not, is always Kénýa, striking, arresting, majestic. The traveller for many miles around lives under a sense of its presence, and when, as happens at certain times of year, the great mountain veils itself in mist for weeks together, there is a felt need in the landscape till it again appear. No wonder that the god of the Akikuyu lives on Kénýa.

The country between these great landmarks consists of a sea of ridge like hills, which gradually merge into plains once more on the northern side. These hills and ridges are from 200 to 600 ft high, divided by well watered valleys, and a traveller standing on the higher levels of the Aberdare Range and looking towards Kénýa, is reminded of the waves of a heavy cross sea.

This undulating land, now dotted all over with groups of brown huts and their adjacent patches of cultivation, has obviously been originally covered by a dense forest of giant trees and impenetrable undergrowth. The tradition of the people gives support to this statement, while here and there at intervals still remain small patches of virgin forest which have escaped destruction through their being used as places of sacrifice.

The Akikuyu say that their nation is derived from the A kam'-ba which is probably correct, as an examination of the two languages will show<sup>1</sup> although certain evidence points to the fission as being remote. The Alam ba are to day their

<sup>1</sup> The Akikuyu of the southern part of the Kénýa province and the Akimba of the adjoining K tui district readily understand each other. } *ocabularies*  
Kamba and Kikuyu Languages (H. Hinde)

neighbours to the south-east.<sup>1</sup> As far as could be gathered from the Akikúyu—for there is nothing of the nature of regular tradition handed down from father to son, or any definite method of preserving the history of past events—they obtained the country by a system of peaceful penetration, effected by individuals, or small bands of individuals united only by family ties. There was nothing of the nature of acquisition by force of arms under one or more military leaders.

They say that the country, when their fathers first came into it, was held by a race of hunters, whom they term A'si, or occasionally A-ki-é-ki, which last they say is the old name, but that there were also spread over it in part a diminutive race known as the A-gum'-ba.

The A'si were, they say, the same as the people to-day known as N'dor-ó-bo, a Masai term, living on the elephant and other wild game, and on wild honey, strong and fierce. They made no attempt at cultivation, built no permanent huts, and owned no goats or cattle.

The Agum'ba, on the other hand, whom the Akikúyu also found in possession, were a race about 4 ft. 6 in. in height. The name given them by the Akikúyu, A-maí-tho ma chi-á-na, can be translated either "the enemies of the children," or "the fierce little people." In another form, Maítho ma chi-á-na, it means "children's eyes," or "the people that look at you as a child would." According to tradition, they lived in the forests and dug pits in which their huts were built. These houses were large and communal, and were roofed with poles, banana leaves, and earth. They made pots, which were larger in the belly than those made by the Kikúyu,

<sup>1</sup> The statement referred to was made to us in at least five different localities of that part of Kikúyu here dealt with. The question of the source or sources of the nation is, however, a difficult one, and nothing definite is yet known. See p. 233; also Eliot, *East Africa Protectorate*, p. 127; Hobley in the periodical *Man*, No. 78, 1900; Dundas, *Man*, No. 76, 1903; McGregor, *Church Missionary Review*, January 1909. The two last named have appeared since the above was written.

and these had been seen by one informant near the holes where their houses used to exist. The natives point out to-day saucer-shaped depressions in the ground as the site of the huts of these little people, and excavation made by us at the spot indicated, substantiates the tradition. The Agum'ba, our friends told us, used bows and arrows, and also had other weapons. "They must therefore have possessed iron." The suggestion that if we dug we might find the arms had been of stone, roused considerable interest. We selected a site on a ridge containing four or five of these saucer-shaped depressions, each some three feet in diameter, and chose one for excavation, across which a trench was dug about two feet wide, running north and south, and another running east and west. Each trench was kept at one level, so as to define the distance from the surface of any article found. At about three feet from the surface we came across fragments of obsidian, which the authorities at the British Museum assure us have been worked by hand. At the same depth there were brought to light fragments of pottery, the charcoal remains of fire, and banana seeds, such as are used by the Akikúyu to-day to form the terminals of the reed petticoat at ceremonial dances. Below this level nothing was discovered. We made an expedition to another site pointed out, and devoted two days to digging, but came to the conclusion that the depression was natural. At the present time in some places huts are built in semi-lunar excavation on the hillside, but not in circular depressions.

When levelling the surface for tent-pitching, which sometimes involves cutting down to a depth of three feet, pieces of obsidian worked by hand were constantly found in the surface soil.

It would, *a priori*, seem most probable that the "eyes of the children" preceded the A'si or N'dor'obo. If so, it would be quite possible for them to retreat before the more

powerful race to those districts where game was least abundant, where they would not be likely to come into contact with them. The peculiar character of the country with its labyrinth of hills would be all in favour of such a proceeding, whilst the density of the vegetation is such, when the country is in a state of nature, that men and flocks who desire concealment can fade out of sight like water spilled on the ground. Such information, however, as was obtained was definitely to the opposite effect, that the A'si preceded the Agum'ba, and that later the two peoples lived side by side in different villages. The A'si wandered far and wide, even reaching what is now German territory, while the Agum'ba took charge of herds. The two tribes, it was stated, even went so far as to intermarry.

Such was the condition of things, so the Akikúyu say, when first they commenced to migrate. Now the A'si, though they had no goats of their own, seem to have much appreciated them for food and for sacrifice. When, therefore, an M'kikúyu had decided to strike out for himself, he went to the A'si and asked leave to make a clearing in their forest, and paid in goats to them for the land he took. "He would pay thirty goats." Placing fire at the foot of a tree, and constantly scraping away the charred portion, he soon threw it down; heaping brushwood along its length, the giant of ages was soon a mass of ash. The light undergrowth he cleared with his sword; then taking a heavy crowbar and driving it deep into the soil in four or five places close together, a sod of tangled roots was loosened, prised up, and overturned. The ground thus broken up roughly was again gone over, this time with a short stick. Each clod was taken by hand and beaten, to separate the soil from the tangled roots, and these were then piled and burned. Around the plot thus formed a fence was run, and the work of the man was finished—all cultivation for the future now resting with his women. Each year this process was repeated, until sufficient land had been brought under cultivation to

supply the needs of him and his. Meanwhile his goats and cattle fed in the forest glades. But gradually the soil became exhausted by the constant repetition of similar crops. He must clear more forest for cultivation, whilst the exhausted clearing now became "the inheritance of the goats"—for sustenance—for the forest where the goats had previously browsed had been now brought under cultivation by another. But his estate was complete—one half under cultivation, one half in fallow—the fallow being to him the equivalent of pasturage. In the midst there was the homestead, a collection of beehive huts surrounded by a strong stockade, his own house and a house for each of his wives, and possibly one for his unmarried sons, with pounds for the cattle at night. The boundaries of the estate thus built up was indicated by the planting of trees in line, by regular hedges, and by boundary stones sunk deep out of sight. Possession of that which he had thus won by hard work he maintained by the power of his sword, and he acknowledged the jurisdiction of no man.

With his harmless little neighbours, "the children's eyes," he did not interfere, but they gradually disappeared from the land. One tradition states that they went "west to a big forest." A very old man, the father of the chief N'du-f-ni, said that his father had never seen the Agum'ba, but he himself had known a track, now vanished, reported to have been made by them. The A'si, too, gradually fell back; their numbers were limited, there was plenty of country for them, and the Akikúyu were numerous, and game was no longer to be found near inhabited districts. So the Akikúyu pushed on and on. Their progress was like that of the locusts—the ranks at the rear, finding the food supply exhausted, taking wing over the backs of the main body to drop to ground in the forefront. And as locusts clear a sturdy crop, so have the Akikúyu cleared the forest. In the heart of Kikúyū, except for a sacred grove here and there, scarcely a tree remains.

As far as the eye can reach, in all directions, spreads one huge garden, every square inch of which is private property with carefully marked boundaries, that have been bequeathed from father to son for generations. The rate of expansion of the nation has been great. It is calculated that, in the known districts of Kénia, it numbers half a million souls, and the western boundary of the country has been brought under cultivation by a breadth varying from ten to fifteen miles within the memory of people still alive. The method adopted to gain this information was to ask any very old man at what definite spots he could recollect having seen elephant droppings when a boy. Drawing a line between the spots thus indicated gives the boundary of cultivation seventy years ago. The same process is probably at work on the eastern side of the country, but Government rules forbid investigation.

In the district dealt with, the slopes of the Aberdare Range alone retain their primitive growth, and the preservation of such woodland as still remains has now become imperative, not only in order to retain a heritage of great natural beauty, but in the interests of timber supply, and, above all, of the rainfall of the country. The inhabitants themselves are not blind to the importance of this last consideration. "In old days," we were told, "there were many big trees and few people and much rain. Now the big trees are all dead and like earth, so there is little rain. These are the words of the ancient men." Nevertheless, the process has continued, and even accelerated, since the coming of the British, which gave the natives security of property and freedom from the necessity of self-defence. It has gone on under our own eyes in a manner that is heart-breaking to witness, more especially in the case of the river ravines where the damage done is irreparable. Gazing westward during the dry season, columns of smoke may be seen rising in every direction, each denoting the fall of a giant. This work accomplished, and the surface soil denuded by the



cultivator of every particle of protection in the shape of shrub or weed, the vegetable mould of ages is soon driven away by the high wind of summer, or swept off by the fierce deluge of the rains and carried down the stream. When the first goodness of the soil is exhausted the same work of destruction is continued still higher up, the habits of the native meanwhile defiling the water-supply, on which very possibly a European settlement may depend. This process has gone on for years within a mile of government station, and all endeavours have been futile to induce the officials to use the very simple methods by which it might be terminated. The Protectorate Government has at last shown signs of interfering through its forest officers, and it is sincerely to be hoped that effectual measures will be taken to put an end to this destruction of what is at once the glory and salvation of the country.



W S R phot

THE GORGE OF THE CHA'-SI-A RIVER NEAR NYTRI

Photo taken in 1904



*K R phot*

THE GORGE OF THE CHA'-NI-A RIVER NEAR NYERI

• Photo taken during second visit to Kikúyu, 1907.

The squared log shown was the only piece of timber used for any useful purpose. All other was burnt as it lay on the ground

## CHRONOLOGY

THE Akikúyu arrange their ideas as to sequence of time when duration of any length is concerned by reference to successive ages. The persons belonging to each epoch bear its name. These ages, as far as our inquiries showed, are identical with generations, the son in every case bearing the appellation of the one succeeding that of his father.

The following are the ages since the creation of the world :<sup>1</sup>

*Man-ji-ri*—When God had finished the world He spoke to the first man, Mam'-ba. Mam'ba told his son N'ji-ri to separate the dry land from the waters. N'ji-ri dug channels, and when he came to the sea built up a bank of sand.

*Man-dó-ti*—The age of evildoers.

*Chi-éra*—The people increased greatly.

*Masaí*—Smearing with red earth became fashionable (no connection with tribe Masaí).

*Ma-thá-thi*—The Akikúyu are said to have come in this age from the tribe of the Akam'ba.

*N'dé-mi*—Root stem "to cut"—during this age the Akikúyu cut trees.<sup>2</sup>

*I-ré-gi*—Meaning "the revolvers." Some persons now alive (1908) have been acquainted with this generation. The era of uprising against the Somalis.

*Ma-i-na*—The generation now dying off.

*Mwan'gi*—The generation in middle life.

*Mu-i-run'-gu*—The rising generation. The name of the next generation is not yet known.

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<sup>1</sup> The first five of these ages have been given by Mr McGregor since we left East Africa. The tradition of them had not been met with by us. For a slightly different version of the ten ages, see Hon. K. R. Dundas, *Man*, No. 101, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> One Kikúyu authority placed the Ndémi before the Matháthi age.

The Chief Mun-gé, belonging to the M'wan'gi, gave the names of his ancestors for four generations, that is as far as his great-great-grandfather, who would belong to the "Matháthi." The aged father of another chief, N'duini, himself of the "Maína," only got as far as the names of his father and grandfather, the latter of the generation "N'démi." No memory we encountered carried beyond the time of the "Matháthi," or, reckoning thirty years for the generations, about a century and a half ago.

Men reckon age amongst themselves according to the year by which they were initiated into the tribe, and each annual festival of circumcision has a name bestowed on it in accordance with some marked feature of the time. Thus the name of the festival in 1897, "Ki-an-gwá-chi," signifies that there were at that date many sweet potatoes; while that of 1907, "Ka-ban-go," literally "the year on the back," recalls the rare occurrence that a boy on that occasion ran away, and was forcibly operated upon in that attitude. It would be interesting to ascertain by what authority these names are bestowed, and also that given to the generation, for they apparently obtain throughout the whole country, and are not confined to any one district. It did not transpire that events occurring in the intervening twelve months are in any way associated with or dated by the names of the circumcision eras.

The following are names<sup>1</sup> which have been given to the successive annual celebrations —

1891, NGAN'DO — No explanation could be obtained for the bestowal of this name.

1892, NGI'GE — The year of the "large variety of locust" (ngige). An individual circumcised at the particular festival known by this name is known as "an Ngige."

<sup>1</sup> We are indebted for the list to Mr McGregor

- 1893, NYON'GO.—The year of a cattle disease, that was characterised by "a rotten belly and running from the nose."
- 1894, MUTUNG'O.—The year of a skin disease all over (small pox).
- 1895, THUNGU'-YA.—The year of a particular scented flower.
- 1896, KA-GI'-CHA.—This year was named in reference to a particular clan which we have been unable to identify.
- 1897, KI-ANOWA'CHI.—The crop of grain known as m'welo failed, but the sweet potatoes were more prolific.
- 1898, NU'-THI.—The year of the jigger or the burrowing flea.
- 1899, KI-EN-JE'KU.—The year when the circumcision 'wound went wrong (septic poisoning).
- 1900, NDI'-MU.—The year that the manioc crop failed.
- 1901, HIT'-TI.—The year of the hyena or hyenas (hitti).
- 1902, KA-MAN'DI.—The year connected with a spear.
- 1903, MO-CHI'-RI (=a judge).—No explanation.
- 1904, KI-HUR'I-A.—The year of the scratcher or something to do with scratching.
- 1905, KAN-YO'-TO.—The year of a certain animal.
- 1906, NGA'-RA.—The year of putting in little heaps.
- 1907, KA-BAN'GO.—The year of lying on the back.
- 1908, Name not decided on at date of our departure.
- The age of a child is always explained by holding out the hand to show its height, and any allusions as to the years of children made in these pages must be taken as computed on this data. Mothers sometimes plant trees on the birth of their children, but appear as a rule to lose count of their ages before very long.

## THE AKIKÚYU IN RELATION TO THEIR NEIGHBOURS.—WARFARE AND TRADE

For many generations past, accident, geographic and political, had, until the coming of the white man, preserved the Akikúyu from the access of almost any external influence.

It has been seen that they are wholly or in part an offshoot of the Kam'ba tribe, whose territory is to the south-east, and that when they migrated to their present abode they found in possession two peoples, one of whom, the Agum'ba, has entirely disappeared, whilst the other was the predecessor of the N'doróbo of to-day. With the Akam'ba they appear to have lived in a state of slight intercourse and desultory warfare.

Of the N'dor-ó-bo little which is accurate is yet known; they roam in small bodies over the vast areas of uncultivated land which adjoin the Kikúyu country. Certain of the Akikúyu, compelled by poverty or the necessity of leaving home to escape being put to death, or even for the mere love of an adventurous life, sometimes take to the woods, but by so doing practically cease to be regarded as Akikúyu, and their countrymen refer to them as N'doróbo, and reckon them as savages.

The most influential neighbours of the Akikúyu are the well-known Masái tribe, a pastoral people, and consequently dwellers in the open. Their country was contiguous to that of the Akikúyu on the south, and extended also over the great plains on the other side of the Aberdare Range. They even rounded the extreme end of that range, and descended on Kikúyu from the northern side.

No sharply defined boundaries separated these neighbours. Between the cultivated hills of the one and the pastoral plains

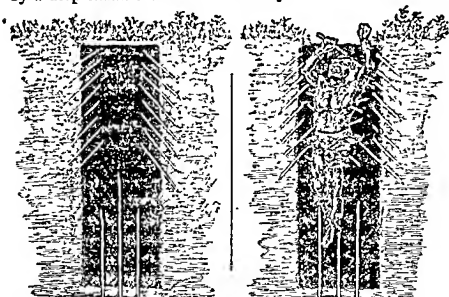
of the other existed a neutral territory of irregular width, formed by country insufficiently watered, and not particularly attractive to either party—a Tom Tiddler's land, where the great game roamed undisturbed, and a general feeling of danger lurked in the air both from man and beast. With both people skilled cattle thieves, it is obvious that it was impossible for the flocks and herds of either to be allowed to graze without a considerable neutral belt intervening.

Between the two nations reigned perpetual war. The Ahikúyu were in their own domain a people to be reckoned with. Not only were they numerically strong, but their country, with its labyrinthine tracks winding up and down a sea of hills, amid dense forest and underwood, was not such as to attract the invader. Their method of defence also might strike terror into the hearts of the boldest, for at the shortest notice they had warpits ready that rendered any track or path almost impassable either to advance along or to retreat by. The accompanying sketch will convey a pretty good idea of the probable deterrent effect of a number of these defences; but a full valuation of their moral effect can only be formed after being dragged back as one lurches forward on the verge of falling into their depths. (For a man of the plains like one of the Masai, armed with a large shield and long spear and sword, to allow himself to be tempted into such a country meant annihilation. Old men still chuckle as they recount the terrible fate of these adversaries, whose custom it was more especially to travel at night, as pit after pit claimed its victims, and the poisoned arrow whistled from out of the dense foliage. The Ahikúyu used from time to time to imprint a lesson on raiders that was not forgotten.)

A people who dwelt in a mountainous country also possessed an advantage over their adversaries in their power of negotiating rivers. Taken as a nation the Ahikúyu are good swimmers. They swim after the manner of a dog, and



I have never seen them employ the breast stroke or the ordinary action of the legs. If a river has to be crossed, however, every one plunges in and gets across somehow. The Masaí neither can swim nor will learn to do so, and nothing on earth will induce them to go into water out of their depth. I have seen a fighting party of two hundred Masaí absolutely stopped by a deep channel in a ford not ten yards wide, whilst their



KIKÚYU WAR HUT

Sectional drawing showing sharpened spikes in interior.

adversaries on the opposite bank reviled them in true Homeric fashion.

The Masaí are, however, on their own lines, a race of fighters, and between the herds feeding in their thousands on the Masaí plains and our Akikúyu, who would have given their lives to possess them, ever stood their long gaunt owners, whose ordered charge, shoulder to shoulder, with its double line of waving plumes and flashing spears, was as irresistible as a stampede of their own cattle.

The Akikúyu have conceived a great admiration for the fashion in war of these redoubtable adversaries, and are inclined to copy their arms and accoutrements. An M'kikúyu warrior dresses his hair in Masái fashion in a pigtail, dons the Masái war mask, with its dark ostrich plumes which he has managed to pick up by trade, and arms himself with a Masái shield and spear; but he has no idea of military organisation, drill, and obedience, and, when it comes to real fighting, makes a miserable display until he reverts to his old tactics. The English, as has been said, availed themselves of the Masái in the subjugation of the Akikúyu.<sup>1</sup>

It is reported that in the generation of the I-ré-gi, the Akikúyu were brought in contact with the Somalis, who came down from the north and endeavoured to establish themselves in the country. They were opposed not only by the Akikúyu, but also by the Masái, N'doróbo, and the Akam'ba. It cannot, necessarily, be concluded that these nations united in the defensive, but they may each have attacked the enemy in their own way and manner. A Somali woman left behind at that time was said to be still alive in 1908. All knowledge of this great war was, however, denied by Ra-zí-mi, father of the chief N'duini, whose own father, as has been said, belonged to the generation Irégi.

The Akikúyu did not to any appreciable extent come in contact with civilisation in any form. They were not entirely cut off from intercourse with the coast, but it affected them but little. The great route for slaves and ivory which ran between the Great Lake and the sea, the Uganda road, just touched its borders on the south-western side, and at that point, which now forms a station on the Uganda railway named Kikúyu, the caravans from the coast used to stop to refit and lay in fresh supplies of grain. The Arab and slave raiders never

<sup>1</sup> The Masái have now been removed from their southern plains to leave them open for white colonisation, and planted in the country of the north, while a fast line has been drawn by the Guaso Nyro River between the two tribes.

seem to have thought it politic to interfere with the Akikúyu; it suited their purpose better to maintain friendly relations with those living in that part in order to make sure of getting the absolutely essential food supplies. The Masái, however, were far more in touch with passing caravans, and in a desultory fashion simple articles of commerce, such as trade salt and brass and copper wire, procured by them as "hon'-ga" or "leave to pass payment," would soak into the Kikúyu country.

On the southern border the Akam'ba, who were from their situation more in communication with the coast, similarly carried on a limited commercial intercourse. The Akikúyu had practically nothing but vegetable produce to sell, except a little ivory.

Slavery as an institution did not exist amongst them, nor did they make raids for the capture of slaves.

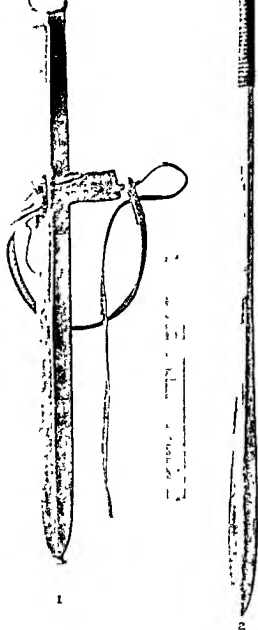
☐ The Akikúyu employ as missiles the poisoned arrow (Pl. vi. p. 16b) and the n'jugúma or life-preserver. For hand-to-hand combat they use the spear (Pl. xxv. p. 36c), the shield (Pl. cxxxvi. p. 344a), and the sword (Pl. v.); whilst defensive works are growing stockades (Pl. xc. p. 116c), war-pits (p. 14), and myriads of sharp, fire-hardened bamboo skewers set betwixt the herbage.

The Kikúyu bow is in appearance a poor weapon: a round stick tapered at both extremities and kept permanently strung. Still, in the dense cover it does all that is required of it, and is the true weapon of the people. The n'jugúma is hurled with accuracy up to 30 yards: the handle transfixes the object. It is deadly.

The peculiar spear and large shield are obviously impossible weapons for use in dense cover. Copied apparently from the Masái, they have gradually become universal as the country lost its forest. ]

With the sword the M'kikúyu is really proficient. .

As a nation they are devoid of the military instinct; as individuals they do not cultivate proficiency in arms.



KIKUYU SWORD AND SCABBARD

Total length of sword,  $31\frac{1}{2}$  in.; weight, 1 lb. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Sword balances at a point 16 in. from the extremity of the handle. The scabbard, when worn, lies between the belt and the body. It is made of wood, covered with goatskin. The leather cover is invariably dyed a bright red with the bark of a certain root.

- Sword—Ro'-hi-yo (pl. hi'-yo).
- " handle—Mu'-ti wa ro' hi-ye
- " scabbard—N'jor'-a.
- " belt—N'do'-ho.



## PLATE VI

### KIAO-U QUIVER AND ARROWS

1 Quiver—of solid leather Round bottom sewn in  
Length, 26 in., girth,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  in

1<sup>a</sup> Its cap, of which the upper extremity is dome-shaped and sewn in

The length of the sling can be adjusted by sliding either of the two collars up or down

2 Detachable extremity of arrow—consisting of a short length of shaft ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  in), of which one end is socketed into the main shaft (2<sup>a</sup>) whilst the other carries a triangular tip of thin iron This iron tip is secured in its place by being forced into a cleft in the extremity of the short shaft, which is then made to tightly pinch it by means of a whipping (a) This is the common form of arrow, and is that used for hunting It is always heavily poisoned

2<sup>a</sup> An arrow shaft from which the movable extremity (Fig 2) has been separated The socket into which it fits is shown at (b), which also indicates the whipping that prevents the socket from splitting The pluming is attached by a whipping The shaft is of solid wood—length, 21 in

All arrows and hunting harpoons are thus made, with heavily poisoned detachable heads The object is to prevent the arrow head being drawn from the wound by the weight of the shaft in the animal's flight

2<sup>b</sup> An arrow ready for use The bulky appearance from socket to tip is due to the thick coating of poison

3 A highly finished war arrow The movable end is one piece of carefully wrought ironwork The shaft is solid wood

4 The movable end of a special arrow used for shooting birds This end is carved out of one piece of wood The barbs (upper end) are not here well shown Below the barbs it assumes the form of a long spindle Reason unknown

4<sup>a</sup> The shaft of Fig 4 It is made of a stem of grass

## PART I



STANDING AT EASE

II S R phot



## PART I

### THE PEOPLE AND THEIR PURSUITS

#### MEN AND MANNERS

in dealing with the Akikúyu people it is as yet impossible to speak definitely on the subject of race. On this matter, as on that of their more recent origin and history, much yet remains to be learnt.

They speak undoubtedly a Bantu language, but Mr. McGregor informs us that they possess another language in addition to that in common use. In height the men are generally about 5 ft. 4 in.; the women considerably less. This statement is not, however, based on any measurements specially taken. Their hair is short and curly, and their skins are black. The colour of the latter is however of a less pronounced shade than the ebony tint which characterises the West African native. They differ widely also from the inhabitants of the West coast in both form and feature. The Akikúyu are exceedingly strong, muscular, healthy, and well set up. The carriage of the women lacks the grace that is often seen in native races, the reason being that loads are carried by them on the back, and not on the head.

Amongst boys and lads when herding the flocks, the habit is not infrequent of standing on one leg, whilst at the same time the sole of the other foot is placed against the inner side of the thigh of the leg that carries the weight. The nature of their employment requires that they shall not sit down for a moment, or they would lose some of their charges amidst the tangled shrubbery on which goats prefer to browse.

Another common attitude of these people is crossing the Pl.

legs when standing this is an unconscious trick or mannerism of young warriors

A peculiar habit of children and young adults is the placing of one finger against the teeth when thinking it is not apparently an expression of shyness

The Kikuyu nation is divided into thirteen Clans (ĩ rĩ ĩa) The members of each clan have a blood tie in common, but are not restricted to any particular geographical area they live side by side A man belongs to the tribe of his father He may not marry a member of the clan of either his father or his mother,<sup>1</sup> but may return to that of his grandmother There are said to be certain other restrictions as to marriage between particular clans which cannot be broken without penalty of barrenness

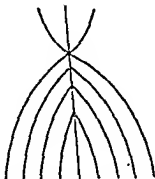
Some clans have a recognised headman, others have not The chief N'duini and his father are heads of the Anjiru The head of the Mwesaga is said to live near Karuri The chief bond of solidarity is mutual responsibility for the murder fine, which can be collected from all members of the clan over a very large district, the arrangement has the curious result, that if a man murders one of his own clan in his own district no murder fine need be paid

It is also reported that members of a clan would meet and discuss any subject and offer sacrifice, and thus arrive at a concerted course of action A clan would always provide hospitality to its own members who were on a journey

There is no distinction in dress and ornament to mark to what clan a man belongs, but certain persons profess to be able to state the clan of any individual by examining his hand Such a person was once challenged by Mr McGregor to name the clans of three men in the missionary's train, and in each case was successful

<sup>1</sup> This was the general result of our investigation and is corroborated by Mr McGregor It was denied in the case of one member of the clan Agachĩku; but this may have been due to a misunderstanding

Bee boxes, as sold in markets, may be seen marked with designs which are said to be connected with particular clans, apparently those of the makers of the boxes.



DESIGN OF THE CLAN AN-JI'-RU.

#### LIST OF CLANS

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. A-ché-ra.                           | 8. An-gá-ri or Ai-the-ka-hí |
| 2. A-ga-chí-ku.                        | 9. An-jí-ru.                |
| 3. A-ga-thi-gí-a.                      | 10. An-gó-i.                |
| 4. Ai-cha-ka-mú-yo.                    | 11. E-thá-ga.               |
| 5. Ai-rí-mu.                           | 12. Ai-ze-ran'-du.          |
| 6. A-ki-ú-ru or M'we-sá-ga or M'bú-ru. | 13. Ai-zi-e-gè-ni.          |
| 7. Am-bú-i.                            |                             |

The traditions in various clans are hereditary and differ from one another, especially as regards food. Some may theoretically eat wild game, others not even out of a pot where such has been cooked. An old man dying, calls his sons, and hands on the instructions given to him by his father. His dying curse, "ki-rú-me," is invoked on those who depart from these instructions. It has been stated that certain lands may be thus entailed by parental direction, and may not be sold. This we have not been able to trace, except as far as regards the preservation of some land under timber. The Achéra, the Ambúi, the Ethága, and the Anjiru<sup>1</sup> may eat wild game. In two other clans, Angári and Aizeran'du, some

<sup>1</sup> One member of this clan said he did not do so.

may eat wild game and some may not. This difference is accounted for by tradition, that in each there were originally two brothers, one of whom went and killed game and the other did not, and their respective descendants adhere to the precedent thus laid down. Men are even met with to whom all meat is forbidden.

The Agachiku clan must not work iron, and must not act as circumcisors. The M'wésaga are the clan most strongly differentiated. They share with the Agachiku the prohibition of working iron. They have also certain mysterious powers. All males of the clan can see rain coming and can stop it, and for them to express admiration of any person is to bring about evil; this can be counteracted by the Medicine-Man, who makes mud with spittle and touches with it the temple, throat, and stomach of the victim. If admiration is expressed without bad intent, no harm will result. They are also bound by filial duty to preserve certain land as woodlands. The clans are again subdivided into families.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. C W Hobley, C M G, gives the following notes on this subject in the *Journal Man*, 1906 —

"Classification of the Kikuyu by their totemic clans —

CLANS.	TOTEM
Kahuno . . . . .	The stomach, etc., of a sheep
M'wizaga . . . . .	All wild game,
Anjuru . . . . .	Elephant and all birds
Agachiko . . . . .	Zebra,
Achera . . . . .	Swala, Thomson's gazelle
Ambera . . . . .	Fish.
Akirandu . . . . .	Hippo
Agaziga . . . . .	Wart hog
Azungeni . . . . .	Mpala.

"Every clan has its medicine man, there is no particular clan of medicine men.

"The people of the M'wizaga clan are supposed to be under a curse, many members of the tribe go off into forests and wander about in a mad state, and eventually die. Their medicine can cure this, but the cure is expensive, costing thirty goats."

Mr McGregor considers that totema exist in particular families, but that the same totem would not obtain throughout a whole clan.



*W S R phot*

ANOTHER MANNER OF STANDING AT EASE

In disposition the Akikúyu are naturally cheerful: merry, loquacious, and laughter-loving. Soon forgetting their troubles and lacking the spirit of vindictiveness. They have a great sense of justice, and endorse the infliction of the severest punishment if they know they are in the wrong. They much dislike and are hurt by the hectoring rudeness of the European of the "damned nigger" school of thought and manner.

Though shrewd enough in matters of business, they are wanting in the ever-present greediness that characterises the Masai.

The M'kikúyu is by nature extraordinarily honest; bright and intelligent, trustful and truthful in contact with one European, he becomes stupid and unreliable, tricky, and treacherous to a degree, in the hands of another: it all depends on how he is treated. His moral code is dealt with more fully later on. He may be summed up as being exceptionally good native material, but of so plastic a character that if badly handled at the outset it is spoiled permanently.

They are naturally polite in their intercourse with one another, and a very definite code of good manners exists. It is the custom for women and children to stand aside for warriors to pass on the path, but the warrior will always yield the road to an old woman. The order kept at all functions is very striking. Even the children, though never harshly treated or spoken to, behave considerately and courteously; very differently from the little European wild beasts who are permitted by their parents to conduct themselves in such a way as to render life a scourge to all the other passengers on board the mail steamers to East Africa.

The custom of spitting on an object in order to secure good luck is found amongst the Akikúyu. This habit exists amongst our own lower orders in the custom of spitting on a coin.

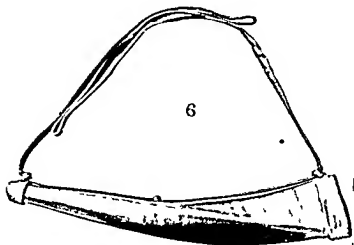
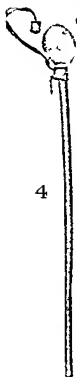
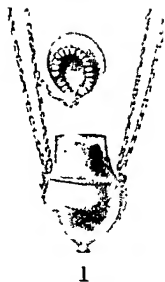
To spit upon a person or thing is also an expression of goodwill. The blacksmith spits upon the sword he has forged before handing it over to the owner: so, too, courtesy demands that a man should spit in his hand before offering it to a friend, and the female visitors spit on the newly-arrived youngsters as a sign of welcome.

I once saw an amusing instance of this spitting in accordance with politeness. An unarmed old man was going across the hollow camp square when a large boarhound puppy sprang on its legs and galloped after him for a frolic. The old fellow suddenly saw it coming, and never having seen such a creature, for the Akikúyu have no dogs, was very frightened, and turned to fly. Then it dawned on him that it was the strange beast of the white man, so he stopped, knelt down, spat into the palm of his hand and extended it to the pup so as to express amity in the same way as he would have done to its master. Now the dog had been taught to "shake hands," so, of course, when it reached him, it sat up and extended its paw, and the friendliest relations were established between them.

The Akikúyu in the districts here dealt with are, according to my experience, a sober people, but it has been stated that in some other districts it is far otherwise.

The old men are inveterate snuff-takers, for no M'kikúyu smokes. The young warriors occasionally take a pinch, but a snuff bottle is not often seen decorating their bosoms. Tobacco, like native beer, seems to be reserved as a consolation of middle life and of old age. Still, to offer snuff to any one is a form of courtesy. It is not an uncommon thing to see one traveller accost another to try the favour of a pinch, and such a request is never directly refused.

The plant is casually cultivated, and the dried tobacco leaf is made up in the form of a rope for the purpose of preservation and convenience in trading. A small portion





of such is taken and slightly greased with sheep's tail fat that has been rendered down. It is then laid on a flat rubbing stone, similar in shape but much smaller than the lower one used in mealing corn. The upper stone employed is, however, altogether different from the upper mealing stone, for it takes the form of a stone globe the size of a large orange. Under this the leaf is triturated by a movement imparted to the ball that is partly a push and partly a roll. (Exactly similar balls are shown in Fewkes, *The Aborigines of Porto Rico*, Plate xxxi. figs. c. f. g.) From time to time more grease is very carefully added drop by drop only, just sufficient being given to maintain it in the condition of a damp powder.

The form in which it is sold in the market is shown on Pl. ix. Fig. 6.

It is expensive. Such a packet would last a man<sup>1</sup> perhaps three days. It would cost two good sticks of sugar cane—something approaching the value of half a day's work, though it is exceedingly difficult to express values accurately when describing dealings between native and native.

<sup>1</sup> The following terms are employed in speaking of men:—

KA'-HE . . . . .	A small boy.
KI'-HE . . . . .	A big boy (uncircumcised).
MU'-MO . . . . .	A young man recently circumcised.
M'WA-NA'-KE . . . . .	A warrior—an adult man.
WA-KA-NY-U-KU . . . . .	A married man.
MUN'-DU MU-GE'-MA . . . . .	” with a child.
KA-RA-BAI' . . . . .	” whose children are <sup>growing up.</sup>
M'ZUR'-I . . . . .	An elderly man
M'ZUR'-I A EI-A-NA . . . . .	” who needs a stick.
M'ZUR'-I A NOU'I . . . . .	” of extreme old age.

## DRESS

THE M'kikúyu carries on his person certain garments and certain ornaments, which, taken together, constitute his dress. His dress (thus defined) varies with his age and with the occasion. Some parts of it are worn for the sake of propriety, some for utility, and some simply to comply with custom. It is convenient to consider that every article, on any individual with whom one may be thrown in contact, falls within one of the above heads, and that each item has its own story to tell. Here we shall solely speak of the dress of the boys and men : that of the women is dealt with elsewhere.

### HAIR-DRESSING

The different ways of dressing the head, either by adding to the hair or by shaving it off, is in itself alone a large subject. Every little district has, in the case of men, its own styles of adorning the hair. Throughout life a man is constantly having his head shaved, in whole or in part, in accordance with passing events of moment to him. To women these remarks do not largely apply, though occasionally a girl or young woman may be seen with a mop head for special reasons, or a middle-aged woman will shave off her tuft, as a white woman would commence wearing a cap.

These frequent ceremonial shavings of the head, and the subsequent permission of the hair to grow again, appear to be dictated partly by a religious feeling and partly by a mere obedience to the canons of custom.

All hair, other than that of the scalp, is pulled out by the roots by both men and women. For this purpose tweezers are constantly carried about the person. When an M'kikúyu has nothing else to do, he hunts for stray hairs.

Their hair is short, curly, and as fine as the finest Anglo-Saxon hair when carefully compared.

*One way* of doing it is to take the smallest tuft of hair possible and to twist into it the fibres of a wood bark, whereby the appearance of a cord of long hair is obtained. This process is repeated all over the head, the length of the cords being regulated according to their position. When they are all completed, a line is taken across the crown of the head from ear to ear. All cords arising in front of that parting are then divided into three equal portions. The ends of the cords of each division are finely whipped together, and form thus three pendants, the centre one of which falls over the middle of the forehead, and the other two over the right and left temple respectively. They are retained in their correct position by a string connecting the points. The cords arising behind the transverse parting are disposed of by allowing the lower ones to remain loose, as a thick fringe reaching well down over the neck; whilst the upper ones, extending from ear to ear, are brought together to form a pigtail, which hangs over and extends below the fringe. This pigtail is well whipped at intervals to preserve its form. The whole is then anointed with a plentiful amount of red ochreous clay and oil rendered down from the tail of the sheep.

*Another style* of dressing the hair is to take the long wing plumes of the vulture (n'dé-ri) and to strip the vane from either side of the stem, thus obtaining from each plume two curling bands of feather. These strips of feather are then securely whipped by one end to tufts of hair. The tufts are composed of all the hair arising from the top of the head over an area of the size of the hand: where our religious bares the scalp by shaving, the native attaches strips of feather as closely as he can.

The rest of the hair is left in its natural state—short, crisp, curly, like a thin woven mat.

The head is anointed with mutton fat and red ochre, but not so the feathers. These are carefully and tastefully arranged so that the natural curl, obtained by stripping the vane from the axis, shall be the same for all feathers on one side of the head.

## PLATE X

### A KIKÚYU WARRIOR—ORDINARY DRESS

Shows—

- a* Special form of hair-dressing with strip of feathers
- b* The shaved forehead
- c* The ornamental brow fillet of beads
- d* Chain earrings (Pl xiii Fig 3)
- e* Metal collar and chain (Pl xvii. Fig 1)
- f* String necklace (Pl xx Fig 1)
- g* Part of shoulders and chest covered with red ochre and fat (showing dark above the clear skin of arm and breast)
- h* The body strap of shells worn diagonally
- i* The garment, here made of calico (Americano), one method of wearing
- j* Arm ornaments—(1) Brass wire, coil (2) Strap worked with beads (Pl xxviii Fig 1)
- k* Method of wearing sword on right side.
- l* Upper iron portion (i tí mu) and part of the middle or wooden portion (m'í ti) of fighting spear
- m* Left arm bracelet—right armlet

Pl. X



H. S. R. phot



## PLATE XI

Fig 1 shows—

- a* A common style of dressing the hair lengthened, parted, whipped into pigtails that from the back of the head lengthened till it covers the whole of the neck.
- b* The cut that is customary when shaping the stomach of the ox into a head covering This example has not yet been trimmed and ornamented
- c* The cartilage of the ear adorned with a special form of Ear ornament (See Pl XIII Fig 2)
- d* A double row of raised scars on the left arm
- e* A special form of arm ornament (Cf Pl XXVII Fig 3)

Fig 2 shows—

- a* The hair dressed in the same way as Fig 1 The pig tails are, however, here fashioned in a manner much more common than is there shown
- b* The head covering is accurately shaped and bordered with beads
- c* The rope-like lobe of the ear is shown passed upwards over the cartilage The cartilage lies beneath the head covering

Attached to the cartilage and dependent from it is an ornament (*ngi ri*) formed of a thin triangular plate of bone The anterior extremity of the *ngi ri* is tucked behind the anterior half of the lobe This ornament is often attached to the hair at the back of the head or dependent over the forehead (See Pl XXV)

- d* The garment is worn passing over and around both shoulders, the manner always adopted for warmth

This effect (Pl x) is very pleasing, the steel black of the feathers contrasting well with the coloured ointment, and harmonising with the natural colour of the skin of the face

With the hair dressed thus, a fillet, consisting of a single row of small black and white beads (*mu gá sí*), is worn. It is placed low on the forehead, but little above the eyebrows, and from its centre a pendant drops to the root of the nose

*Another way* of dressing the hair is to take a tuft in the centre of the crown and to attach to it a pellet of clay the shape and size of a filbert. From this central button others are symmetrically arranged in concentric circles, each plaque touching its neighbour above, below, and laterally. Being coated with grease and red ochre, the appearance is that of a roof of red ornamental tiles. The whole of the hair of the head is thus treated. One small ornament only is worn independent from the crown when the hair is thus dressed

*One of the commonest styles* is very effective. In this the naturally short hair having been lengthened by having bark string twisted up with it, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, cords of the desired length having been attached to the head by twisting them into tufts of the natural short hair, an effect is obtained exactly like the roped coat of a prize poodle dog

The hair thus lengthened is then allowed to hang naturally without any further restraint. The cords are of such a length as to reach to the shoulders, but those falling over the forehead are made short not depending below the brows. In fact, the hair immediately above the forehead is shaved off in order that the short cords in front may hang in the fashion desired

No hat nor cap is generally worn by the people, a form of casque shaped head covering, made from the stomach of the ox turned inside out may, however, occasionally be seen. This headgear is much worn by the Masai warriors, and the Akikúyu have probably copied it from them



## EAR ORNAMENTS

The first thought of a M'kikuyu is to ornament his ears : to this even the dressing of his hair is a secondary consideration.

Ear ornaments may be divided into—

(1) Those attached to the edge of the cartilage (du-gé-ra) of the ear.

(2) Those supported by the lobe (gú-tu).

The *cartilage*, in the case of men, has three holes made in its upper convex border to support three quills in an erect PL. IX position. Sometimes another hole is made in it lower down, but this is to carry some other form of ornament, for quills PL. IX are not worn projecting horizontally.

In some districts the men wear five quills instead of three, but five quills are usually only worn by the women.

Some months before the time for the circumcision rite to be performed, the *lobes* of the boys' ears are pierced. The aperture is gradually dilated, by constantly wearing in it a succession of rings of gradually increasing size, until an object PL. X the size of the largest orange may be passed through it easily. To achieve this condition is said to take about four months.

Together with dilatation of the aperture, hypertrophy of the lobe takes place, until it becomes like a round india-rubber cord the size of a stout lead pencil, and often reaches as a loop down to the shoulder.

When not in use for the support of an ornament, the dilated lobe is loosely twisted up, and the eye, thereby formed at the end, passed over the cartilage so as to hang it up and to prevent PL. X it getting torn. Should this happen a surgical operation is required to make good the damage, and for this the fee is a goat.

Some of the ornaments worn by men in the *cartilage* are—

(1) The *ear quills* (s. ron-i-or'-i, pl ny-or'-i, also chú-ma). PL. X

In the simplest form these are single stems of grass having

a bead of gum at the base. The free end is passed through the hole in the cartilage. It cannot slip out backwards, because of the bead of gum. It does not slip out downwards, because of the position it assumes in consequence of its length.

The same ornament, in a different form, consists of a strip of leather placed in the hollow of the upper edge of the ear, into which are fitted the larger ends of the stems of three feathers. Each rachis passes through a corresponding hole made in the upper border of the cartilage. On each shaft are placed six dark blue beads, and the tip is finished off with one small white bead and a whipping of thread and gum.

(2) A *helix* of brass wire (hu-la-hú-li) forming a boss, worn in the lowest aperture made in the edge of the cartilage.

(3) A *ring* of the very smallest coloured beads, threaded on a fibre of tendon, worn in the fourth or lowest aperture made in the cartilage.

(4) A *tassel* of the finest beads.

In men the dilated lobe may support—

(1) A *cylinder of wood* (mú-ti wa gu-tu), plain or ornamented.

(2) A *disc of wood*, usually ornamented with inlaid beads.

(3) *Hoops* of various sizes. They are carved from wood, and have a deeply-concave border, in which the rope-like lobe of the ear lies.

(4) An *oval disc* (go-so-reí-i) of lead. Europeans say that these were originally beaten out of Maria Theresa dollars, formerly current on the coast.

(5) A *cylinder* made of twisted wire, the *shape* and size of a small *cotton reel*—from this depends short lengths of chain.



H A R U R

# PORTRAIT OF HARUR

One of the most influential of the *Wakuyu*, and a man of great ability. Shows —

- 1 The anterior portion of the scalp shaved  
The rest of the hair in its natural condition, ungreased and not artificially lengthened. This, in the case of a man of his years is quite exceptional
- 2 A typical *kikuyu* —  
(a) The earring carrying a number of ear rings  
Cf Pl xiii Fig 5  
(b) The lobe (reaching to the level of the chin) containing another peculiar ear ornament Cf Pl xiii Fig 6
- 3 The way in which the garment (here made of monkey skins and of the long form) is brought together over the right shoulder by a thong and sliding wire stop
- 4 A pair of iron wire armlets
- 5 The usual walking stick

EAR ORNAMENTS

Fig 1a Mu in' do, a peculiar ornament of the lobe of the ear, worn by men only. One to six may be worn.

Fig 1 Method of making mu-in'-do

A short length of iron wire (v) is whipped at each end with fine iron wire (x, y). A small rib of copper is now wrapped around each end and hammered into a boss of the particular shape shown. The bar is then bent to the required form and the final whipping added.

Length in the straight, 3 in

Length when shaped,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in

Two mu in -do weigh  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz

Fig 1a is Fig 1 to which the final shape has been given and the final additional whipping of fine copper wire added between x and x.

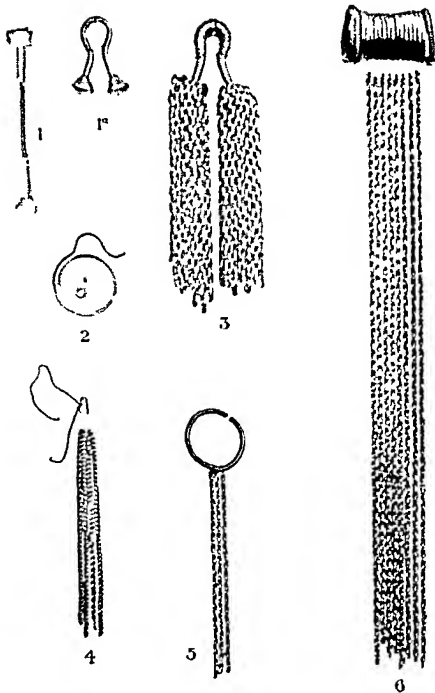
3 Mu in' do ornamented with short lengths of chain, worn by elderly men only. For comfort the wearer has added a wrapping of leather at top. Length from top of curve to bottom of fringe,  $4\frac{3}{4}$  in. weight,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  oz.

2 Hu la hu li, ornament worn by anybody in lowest of the perforations in the cartilage. "Formerly it was worn by old men, but not nowadays. Diameter,  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. The centre stands above the surface  $\frac{1}{8}$  in.

4 Lengths of iron chain worn attached to the cartilage, obtained from Meru (foot of Mt Kenya). The pattern of the chain is kamba ( ). Length,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.

5 Open ring of iron wire whipped with fine copper wire to which is attached lengths of fine chain. Worn in the cartilage. A number of similar but considerably larger rings are shown in use Pl XII p 32a.

6 Ke chu i ( a ring ) is an ornament of the lobe. A spiral of iron wire in the form of a cylinder, is whipped with fine copper wire at either extremity. To a bead span lengths ( $9\frac{1}{2}$  in) of chain are attached. Weight, 2 oz. To fit it to the ear the iron wire is straightened out. On it an iron tube is then threaded. By means of the tube the straightened wire is then coiled around the lobe of the ear to form the figure shown in use Pl XII p 32a, Pl XIII.



# PLATE XIV

## EAR ORNAMENTS—LOBE ONLY

1 A pile of rings (n'de -be) of different sizes for expanding the lobe of the ear. Worn by girls and young married women, also by warriors and men of all ages, but never by boys and girls until preparing for initiation.

2, 21, 2b Examples taken from pile 1 viewed from different aspects. Circumference of the smallest, 4 in., of the largest, 8½ in.

3, 3a, 3b Solid discs of wood, ornamented with beads on outer face, worn for ornament in the distended lobe.

3 Circumference, 7½ in., depth, 3½ in.

3a " 7½ in., " 1½ in.

3b " 7½ in., " 1½ in.

Largest specimen in collection is 9 in. in circumference.

5 A plain solid cylinder of wood, shaped at the ends (k1 lori gi'-ti ya gu -tu). The two points that come next to the neck are somewhat shortened.  $a-b = 1\frac{7}{8}$  in. Not worn in pairs.

4 Similar article to 5, but larger and slightly ornamented.  $a-b = 3\frac{1}{2}$  in.

6 Is similar to 5 and 4, and made of solid ivory. Referred to as mu'-ti wa gu' tu. The lower inside tip has been shortened.

7, 7a k1 lin gi -ti ya gu'-tu. A beautifully modelled wood ornament into which the rope like lobe is slipped. Not common. Worn by warriors only. 7a, position when in use. 7, laid on its side to show construction.

Length, 7a,  $a-d$   $b = 3\frac{1}{4}$  in.

Depth, 7a,  $d-c = 1\frac{7}{8}$  in.



1



6



7



4



7a



5



2



2a



2b



3



3a



3b

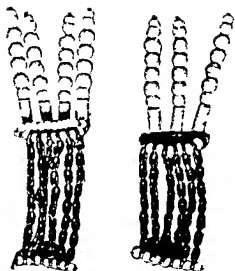
## PLATE XX

### LAR "BLOCKS

1 Carved ornament of wood (mu-ti wa gu-tu) The spike *a* is passed through the distended lobe of the ear. The lobe is then slightly stretched to allow it to be slipped over the lower point, *b*. Between *b* and *c* is a shallow groove extending round the whole circumference of the article. In this groove the hypertrophied lobe lies like a solid rubber tyre on a bicycle wheel. Uncommon. Extreme length,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. Length of prong, *a-c*,  $2\frac{7}{8}$  in. Circumference in groove, *b c*,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  in.

2 A common form of ornament for the lobe (mu-ti wa gu' tu). A hollow wooden cylinder carved into form indicated. The extremities of the spikes are united by a string of beads. The lower end of the cylinder is thrust into the slightly stretched loop formed by the hypertrophied lobe which lies around it at the level *d-e*. In wear the spikes maintain a position directed upwards and slightly forward. Girth, *d-e*,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. Extreme length,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  in. Length of prong,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in. Interval between prongs, outside to outside,  $2\frac{3}{8}$  in.





*Brit. Mus.* [A.]

EAR "STICKS" (RON 1 01'-1)

Worn in the cartilage of ear

One of the most typical ornaments of the Akikuyu. The essential thing is the spikes (*b c*), which rise above the upper border of the cartilage. The piece of leather (*a*), into which the "sticks" are set, lies in the gutter in the upper external border of the cartilage. Its function is merely to support the sticks. The chain dependent from the leather as here shown is a somewhat unusual addition.

Cf Pl. VIII Pl. XXI



*Brit Mus (A)*

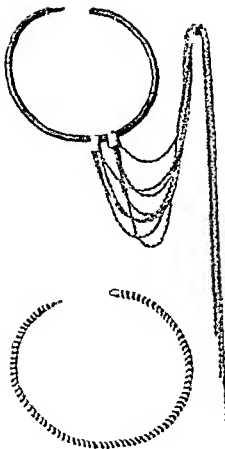
# NECKLACE

The beads of the string are a dark blue (the most valued colour) The extremity of each length of the fringe of chain is terminated by two milk-white beads tied to it.

Length of necklace, 15½ in.

General length of fringe throughout, 2½ in.

## NECK ORNAMENTS



*Brit Mus (K)*

Mer'-u country (foot-hills of Mt Kenya)

2 A flat ornamental collar of flexible iron. Made apparently by binding a core of smaller gauge wire with other much stouter, leaving a considerable and even interval between each turn. The whole has been then somewhat flattened and rendered homogeneous by hammering. Each turn thus rests against its fellow at an angle of  $45^\circ$ . One extremity of the whipping wire terminates in a hook and the other in an eye.

Obtained from an M'kikúyu from the Mer'-u country (foot-hills of Mt. Kenya).

1. Mu-hi-ni-o, or collar, formed of a single rod of stout iron wire whipped around with fine iron wire. Over the centre (where there is no whipping) lengths of chain are laid, and then over them two pieces of flat iron are folded. These are compressed laterally, converting them into a tube. From each tube four lengths of fine iron chain depend to the wrist.

One of the commonest and most graceful of the neck ornaments. Worn both by men and women; never by children.

Circumference of collar,  $\frac{7}{8}$  in.

Length of dependent chain, 24 in.

Obtained from an M'kikúyu of the

## PLATE XIX

### NECKLACES

1 A necklace of beads with a fringe of trumpet-shaped pieces of hard wood. Such is worn by boys and by old men not by others. It is simply called *mi'-ti*. The only interest is in the design.

Total length, 15 in.

Length of trumpet, 1 in.

2 Hoops of fine grass plaited over a core of string (*ma-li-gi-ri-gi*). Made by little girls when bird-scaring and used by them only. The hoop is formed by tying together the two ends of twine. Some half-dozen are worn.

Length, 19½ in.

3. *Ki-ban'-di*, a neck ornament made and worn by boys. Five lengths of grass stem (1½ in.) are brought together by a double string passing through the cavity of each. Another cord forming the neck string is, at the same time, passed through each bight projecting at the upper end. The string passing through the grass stems is then drawn tight and secured.

4 A single string of beads of graduated sizes. The larger beads are formed of the wood *mu-hu'-ti*, the smaller ones of the wood *ki-ra'-go*. They are valued for the scent they are considered to give off when rubbed together in wear. Worn doubled, forming two necklaces.

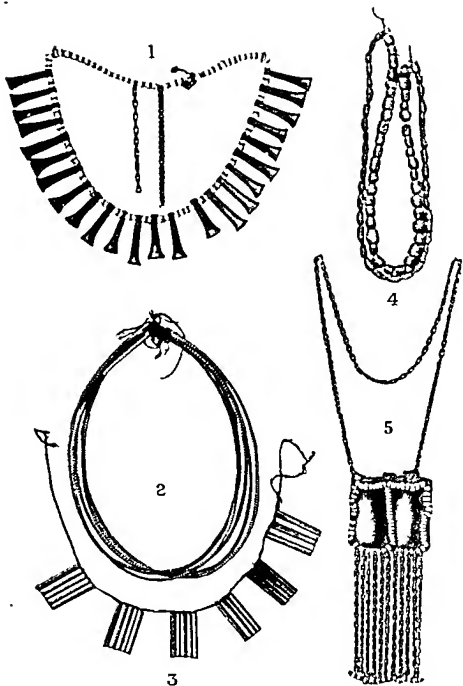
Total length of string, 60 in.

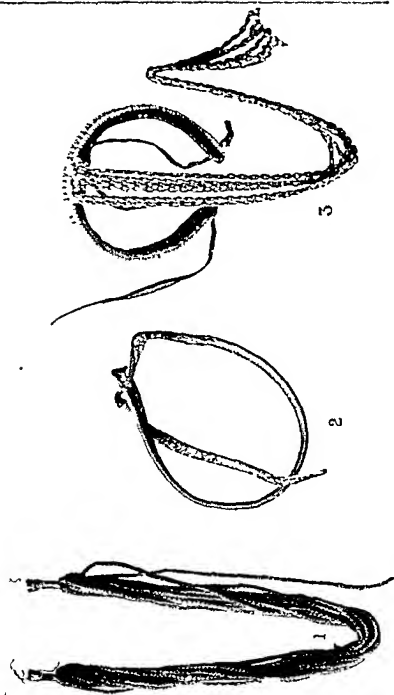
Circumference of largest bead, 2½ in., of smallest, 1¼ in.

5 *Mon'-do*, satchel worn round the neck by boys, warriors, and elderly men. Each compartment contains a "medicine"—i.e., a variety of different drugs as compounded for the wearer by the medicine-man to form a charm. The design and workmanship of the article is that of the wearer.

Size, 2 x 2 in.

Fringe, 3 in.





## NECI IACES

1 Ma rei-mc'-li, an ornament of fixed design worn by boys only up to time of circumcision

A string of blue beads (16 in) has betwixt each bead in its anterior portion eighteen ribs of leather folded over it and whipped with copper wire. A cowrie shell, to which are attached six lengths of iron chain (14 in), forms a pendant

2 I ken i a, or collarette, worn by big girls and married women. The pattern is said to be very old fashioned

Length of necklace, 21 in

pendant, 3 in

, chain, 11 in

Necklace beads, two outside rows, milk white

„ centre row, red

Pendant beads, two outside rows, red

„ „ centre row, milk white

3 Represents one of two specimens. Both have obviously had much wear. Each obtained from a different source, yet details of construction are identical. Necklace formed of treble row of beads, centre row dark blue, outer rows milk white. To this is attached row of cowrie shells, their extremities united by single row of milk white beads.

The treble row of beads is maintained in ribbon form by strip of leather pierced by three holes to carry the three threading strings.

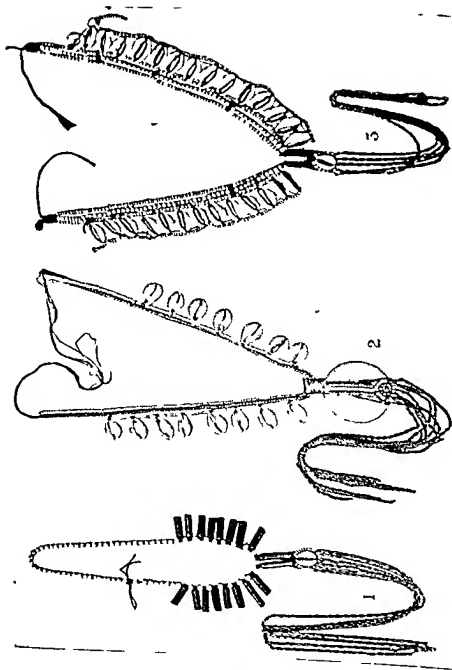
Length of collarette, 18½ in

„ pendant, 1½ in

„ chain, 11½ in

Pendant of one worked with blue beads

„ other „ „ white „







*Brit Mus (A)*



## A VALUABLE NECKLACE

The leaves of a certain plant are much appreciated for their scent. They come, the natives say, from the country near Lake Naivasha, and hence were formerly only obtained through the Masai by trade. From the leaves these necklaces are made by the Akikuyu. Each element consists, on section, of one or more leaves compressed into a solid cone. The appearance of an open wire whipping is due to the midrib. Each cone is held tightly against its neighbour by a knotted cord encircling its larger end  $\frac{1}{2}$  in from the base.

Of each element, length

1 in

Of total necklace, length

28 in

The Kikuyu name of the necklace and of the plant from which it is made is malichua.

## ORNAMENTATION OF THE FACE AND NECK.

The nose, the nostrils, and both of the lips are never in any way pierced or ornamented.

No M'kikúyu, in the districts dealt with, either files or removes any of his teeth. This is the more remarkable considering the fearsome practice of the Akam'ba, from whom the Akikúyu say they are descended. ( The Mas-ai, too, invariably remove an upper incisor in order, they declare, that they may be fed with milk when the jaws are clenched with tetanus. On the other hand, the Akikúyu, their neighbours, say, when questioned, that they find no necessity to do so for this purpose. As a rule their teeth are excellent, and caries rare. In cases of decay and extreme pain, a tooth is removed by breaking away the wall of the socket with the point of a knife tapped on its butt with a stone. The damage done to the jaw is considerable. The dentist's fee is a load of flour. They do not seem to experience pain to anything like the same extent that a European would under similar circumstances. The natives are constantly polishing their teeth with a green stick which has been chewed at one end, so as to form a brush, and they say they use charcoal, or a form of soft stone, as tooth-powder. I have never seen them use a toothpick, but have been warned that to employ a porcupine quill for the purpose will result in all the teeth presently becoming friable, and breaking down "like dried mud."

( Big lads and girls frequently decorate their cheeks with a pair or more of patches in the form of a star, and each the size of a shilling. For this purpose a vegetable dye is used that temporarily stains their naturally brownish-black skin to an intensely black hue. They also sometimes adorn their faces with a painted domino of blue or red on the occasion of a dance ; it has no significance that the writer is aware of, but he has seen it also amongst the Masai. )

The neck is always, from earliest childhood, decorated by some form of collar or band. This is usually composed either of beads of sorts, of cordage, or of wrought metalwork. In addition, there is the chain sling of the universal snuff bottle.

Each age of each sex wears the ornaments peculiar to it. Custom even prescribes, too, the manner in which an article shall be worn according to the occasion. For instance, the belt that is edged with a fringe of chain must be worn around the waist in public, yet the same is permitted to be worn and is usually worn, as a sash, passing over one shoulder and under the opposite arm when herding the goats.

Most of the different forms of ornament are illustrated in the plates, and are accompanied by detailed notes on their use.

### RAIMENT

The one and only garment worn by men and boys for protection is the n'gu o, a form of cape. Of these the best are made of goat skins selected for their colour, which may be either all dark chestnut, or chestnut and white as alternate skins, and ornamented with beads and raised leather work. Short bright lengths of chain are also attached to small rosettes of beads, and very effectively set off the rich, dark goat skin. This garment may often now be seen made of cotton which is sometimes preferred on account of its lightness. The length required is three "hands"<sup>1</sup>.

This garment is worn in such a manner as to completely drape the whole of the upper part of the body, and is held in its place by an adjustable thong which brings together the ends of the upper border at a point  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in from the corners. This thong nips the right shoulder, either just above or below its curve. The right arm is thus free to manipulate the sword and spear. The left arm is either covered or left bare according to the fancy of the wearer. The whole effect is very graceful.

When working in the fields men often wear only a banana leaf. The midrib forms a strap around the waist, whilst the blade of the leaf, splitting into strips, depends from the midrib, forming a short petticoat. It is considered improper

<sup>1</sup> A hand is the distance from the internal condyle of the elbow joint to the tip of the middle finger. The price is a fixed sum. The purchaser is only entitled to claim his own arm as the measure. He is not entitled to call in any long armed friend. The seller may not himself measure off the stuff.

even when working quite alone, to be unclothed, and any one transgressing is liable to be reported, and brought before the elders of the village. A man, however, is considered fully dressed if he is wearing his mu-ni-or'-a; which is a strap an inch wide, from which depends a fringe of fine chain 3 in. deep, as referred to above. Pl. xxi  
Fig. 2.

The short cape is sometimes seen in the colder and wetter parts lengthened to the knee and widened. It is then made of the handsome pelts of the grey monkey or of the hyrax. But these long robes are not worn by the younger men. Pl. xxv

## ORNAMENTS OF ARMS, WAIST, LEGS

( The curve of the shoulder and the outer part of the upper arm is often decorated by small lenticular artificial scars of a keloid character. Beyond this no form of tattooing is indulged in. On the upper arm some one of the many special ornaments for the purpose is almost invariably worn, as also are different sorts of bracelets, some shapes extending half-way to the elbow. Pl. xi. F

On the fingers may sometimes be seen rings formed of a coil of fine wire; again, in some parts an incurved lozenge-shaped plaque of iron forms the upper surface of a ring which covers the whole of the back of the proximal phalanx. This form of ring is very common amongst the Masai. Pl. cxi

Round the waist is worn some form of fringe which varies in character with the occasion.

Above the swell of the calf is usually some form of ornament, whilst the ankle is commonly encircled with a thong on which are threaded a number of little bells which pleasantly mark the wearer's otherwise silent tread. These lie below a band of black fur.

Sandals are seldom worn except by travellers.

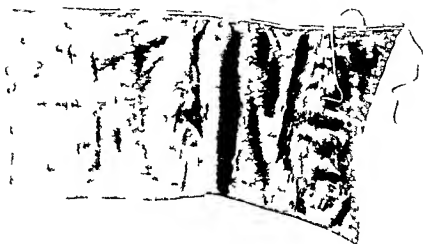
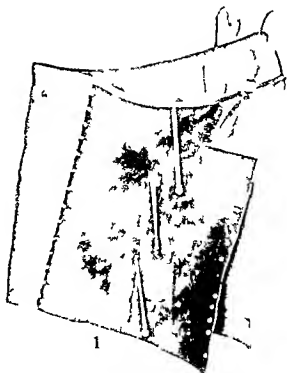
PLATE XXIV

THE ONE AND ONLY GARMENT OF MEN AND BOYS,  
THE N'gũ-o

1 A n gu-o folded to show manner of wearing it. Size of this example,  $4\frac{1}{2} \times 22\frac{1}{2}$  in

2 Another specimen spread out flat to show the cut  
Size of this,  $42 \times 22$  in

Pl viii p 20c, Pl xxv p 36c, show the appearance in wear



# PLATE XXX

## TWO YOUNG WARRIORS IN MUFTI

Figure to left shows —

- (a) Mode of wearing the garment, in this case made of goatskins
- (b) Beadwork cap of stomach of the ox
- (c) Peculiar triangular ornament (n'gi' ri), attached to hair and dependent over forehead See Pl XI Fig 2
- (d) The ear quills See Pl XVI
- (e) The collar with dependent chain reaching below the waist Two such are here worn See Pl XVIII Fig 1
- (f) The mode of wearing the sword The scabbard lies next to the skin on the side where the garment is open See Pl V
- (g) Bracelets of iron wire Pl XXVII Fig 5
- (h) Fighting spear The whole is of wrought iron, except that portion here grasped by the left hand
- (i) Ornamental garter See Pl XX Fig 2
- (j) Beads round left ankle Pl XXVIII

Figure to right shows —

- (a) The garment, here made of trade calico
- (b) The hair lengthened sufficiently to extend over the forehead and well down the nape of the neck
- (c) The fillet of beads across the forehead
- (d) Another form of fighting spear
- (e) "Medicine" sewn into leather sachet, and attached to a strap worn round the right ankle





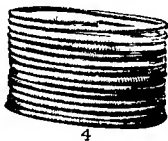
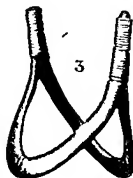
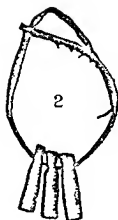
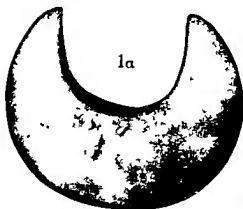
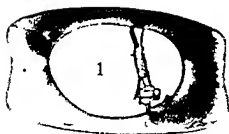


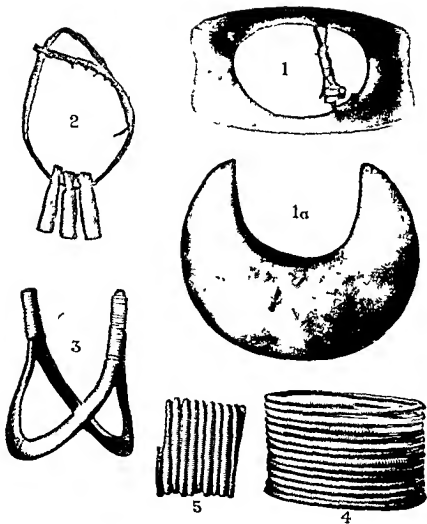
*H. S. A. phot*

AN MUKULU OF MIDDLE AGE FROM THE LOWER  
SLOPES OF MOUNT KINANGOI

A well groomed wealthy, and dignified old gentleman  
Pl shows —

- (a) The large warm garment occasionally worn in the colder districts. It is made of picked monkey skins
- (b) Method of wearing the garment when warmth is not desired
- (c) The spear carried by veterans being lighter than the fighting one Pl cxvii





*Brit Mus (R)*

## PLATE XXVIII

### KI-NI-A'-TA, OR EMBROIDERED BANDS

Worn by boys, unmarried girls, and warriors.

By girls around the neck and around the upper arm.

By boys and men above the calf, above the swell of the biceps, and around the neck.

1. Size,  $8\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{3}{4}$  in (at ornamental tab)

2. Size,  $9\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{3}{4}$  in To show tongue at one end that is passed through the hole in the other end. Length of tongue, 5 in. Cf. 2a.

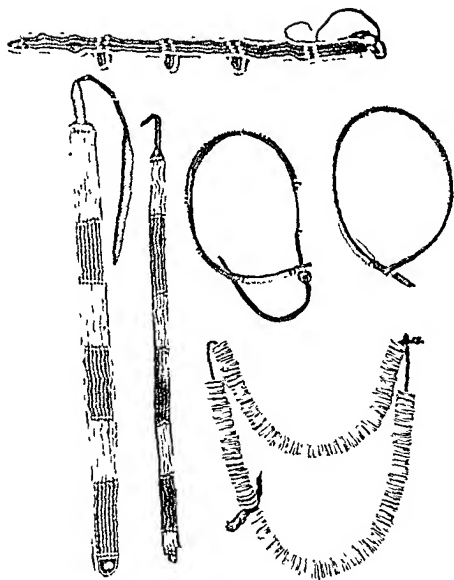
3. Size,  $10\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{3}{4}$  in

2a is Fig. 2 to show method of fastening by a sliding bead.

3a. The common form of stop on any thong, being a cylinder formed of fine iron or copper wire.

4. A necklace (rare) formed of discs of bone. Each disc is  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. in diameter and concavo-convex—probably due to method of manufacture Process has not been observed.

Two other specimens of embroidered straps, not here shown, measure respectively  $11\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{4}$  in and  $11\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$  in



## PLATE XXIX

### WAIST FRINGES

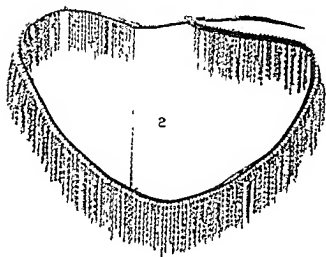
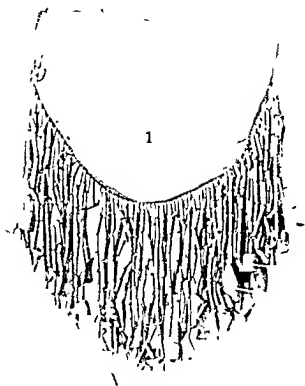
1. An unornamented leather strap to which is attached a fringe of cords, eighty-five in number. Each of these averages 8 in in length, and is composed of short pieces of grass stem (1 in). Each cord is terminated either by the addition of the upper extremity of the fruit of the gourd, or with a claw of the ant bear, which is hollow. On movement a clunking sound, as of sleigh-bells, is produced.

*a* = claw

*l* = gourd (similar to tip of a cucumber)

2. The *Mu ni or o*, or *Waist Fringe*. Universally worn by warriors and by middle aged men. From a leather strap, ornamented with a double row of blue and white beads, depend short lengths ( $2\frac{1}{4}$  in) of chain. The pattern and ornamentation of the *mu ni or o* does not vary. It is fastened by passing the pointed thong, terminating one extremity, through a hole pierced in the other. The spiral of brass wire (*c*) that is slid along the pointed thong as a stop is here well shown.

Length of belt (fringed), 30 in



17 35

*Brit Mus (K)*



## LAND AND AGRICULTURE

## LAND AND AGRICULTURE

THE Kikúyu country is as fertile as it is beautiful. The only problem for the student is how a people naturally so unwarlike has contrived to possess and to hold so desirable a residence. In its natural condition it abounds, as has been seen, in both wood and water, while the soil is so suited for cereal crops that it has become the granary of this part of Africa. In the case of famine in other districts, large supplies of corn are bought here by the Government and forwarded for the purposes of relief. The present condition of the land can best be made clear by considering it as virgin, wooded, fallow, or cultivated. Of these the last is by far the most important. The land which is used for pasture—it can scarcely be called pastoral land—is spoken of hereafter.

The manner in which the *Virgin Land* on the confines of the country is being brought into private ownership has been described. In the heart of the country the only vestiges which remain are the sacred groves and the common grounds preserved by custom, such as the dancing-greens. These last in some cases owe their present form to communal labour.

*Woodland* is, generally speaking, non-existent, the country having been denuded of trees, but there are the following exceptions. In addition to the sacred groves, which are usually found on hilltops, a certain species of giant forest tree is considered sacred and is always preserved. It is known as the mú-ti mú-gu, and is a form of ficus. These trees may be destroyed by grass fires, but are never intentionally cut down.

Isolated trees here and there are allowed to remain in order

that bee-boxes may be placed in them, and they form conspicuous objects in the landscape. The traveller who goes half a mile out of his way attracted by the hope of shade, will be doomed to find the bees already in possession.

Certain trees, up to about twenty feet in height, are found amongst the cultivated land. They are pollarded stocks whose shoots are useful in hut-building; therefore they are spared.

Lastly, in parts of the country, all too few in number, small copses may be found preserved for timber. These cannot be used without leave being obtained and payment given. They are said to belong "to the chief," or at times "to the elders." It remains for other inquirers to show how far this is a case of communal ownership. The obligation of the clan M'we-sá-ga to keep certain lands under woodland has already been pointed out.

*Fallow Land* is all in private ownership, and cannot be again brought into cultivation by any one except the owner, without his leave. For such permission, in the majority of cases, payment would be expected in the form of goats, though a rich man might occasionally make a present to a friend who desired an additional shamba.

*Cultivated Land.*—The Akikúyu are essentially an agricultural nation. The countryside, when not awaiting its turn of cultivation, presents the appearance of large allotments or of small fields divided by hedges. The arable ground is generally in lots of one and a half to three acres, one or more being assigned to the care of each wife of the head of the homestead. Interspersed are large plantations of bananas, manioc, and sugar-cane.

The whole of the people are cultivators of the soil. It is the duty of the men to clear the land of the virgin forest, or of the brushwood that covers it after lying fallow, and roughly to break up the surface. Their help is also required

to scare the birds from the ripening crops; beyond this they nominally contribute nothing. In practice, however, they do much more, planting and hoeing and harvesting, for if a man has not womenkind enough to cultivate his ground he is obliged to assist, and it is not considered derogatory to do so.

Two instruments only are employed in agriculture. One is the crow-bar (*mu-ga-rú-ru*) for the original breaking up of the ground, which proceeding has already been described. This is a wooden stake seven feet long, about as thick as the wrist, and sharpened at one end into a long fine point.

ig.3 The other is known as the *ká-hi-yu*, and is a lanceolate instrument of iron like a spear-head, set into a short handle. It is stabbed into the ground and the handle depressed, by which means the soil is prized up with great rapidity as with a spade. The power is chiefly derived from the wrist. The *ká-hi-yu* are made by the native smiths and are of native iron. They are not sharpened. Their form and size are invariable.

The equatorial year has of course no winter and summer. Its passage is marked by two wet seasons, which occur in what are our spring and autumn. Planting is done in all cases at the first commencement of the rains, and harvesting as soon as the crop has ripened after their cessation. There are therefore two seed times and two harvests in twelve months, and when an *M'kikúyu* speaks of "a year," he means six months.

Cutting out in paper in ample quantity the moon in its different phases, and with a supply of counters to represent rain, hoeing, birds, etc., we got some of our native friends to set out for us what they considered to be a typical *Kikúyu* agricultural year. After due deliberation the subjoined scheme was considered by them to be so. It must be taken, not as an absolute statement of fact, but as the *Kikúyu* ideal of a

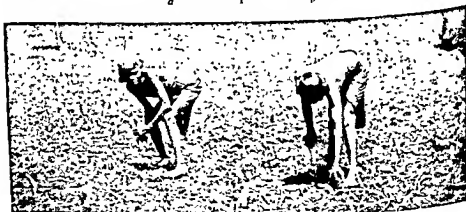


H. S. K. ph 1

CULTIVATED LAND IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF NYLRI



a 1 b



a 2 b



a 3 b

K. R. phot.

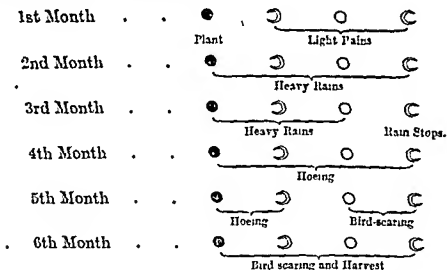
### WOMEN HOEING

1. Both figures (a and b) show attitude of women at field-work and method of holding ká-hi-yu.

2. a shows attitude in repose, b attitude in work.

3. a shows attitude in repose, b typical attitude in planting and hoeing. The spinal curves are remarkable, also the slight degree of flexure of knee-joint.

typical year. The rains are very irregular, and if they fail altogether the crop perishes.



Maize, the principal crop, is sown by stabbing holes with the *kai-hu*, about 6 inches in depth and 2 feet apart, into each of which two seeds are dropped.

During the hoeing and weeding season the women are much occupied in the fields, the attitude which they assume for work, bending straight from the waist downwards with knees almost straight, would not commend itself to a European. The men squat on their heels for the same work. The *ká-hi-yu* is a very efficient instrument for dealing with weeds, as they are thereby prized up bodily by the roots.

As soon as the crops are sufficiently ripe to attract the birds, the protection of them becomes a serious business, in which the whole population take part. Temporary platforms are erected in the fields so that the whole field of operations may be in view, and stones and pieces of earth are thrown at the depredators, slings are also used for this purpose. The flocks of small thieves are addressed by every abusive epithet, and hoarse cries and shouts echo from hill to hill throughout the country-side.

At harvest-time the ears of corn are gathered by hand and carried in bags of plaited string to the huts, where they are hung up to dry. They are then stored in huge baskets inside the enclosure of the homestead. These baskets are roofed in and set upon legs, to avoid the depredation of vermin.

The more important grains are:—

*Maize* (*zea mays*): Kik. m'bem'-bi; Swa. mu-hin'-di.

*Kaffir corn* (*Sorghum vulgare*): Kik. moh'-cha or mwú-i; Swa. m'tá-ma, the Indian millet.

*Micc'-li*, a fine grain, something like canary seed in appearance.

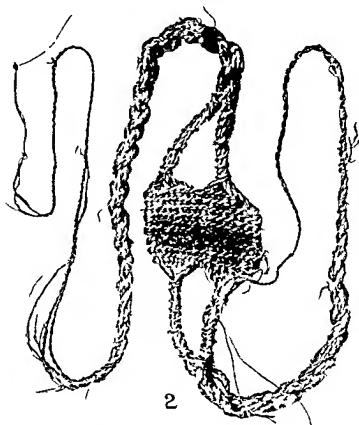
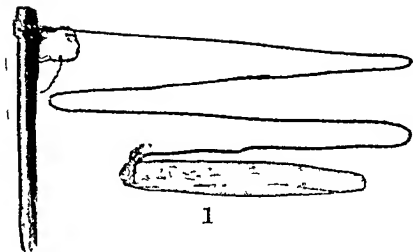
Others of less importance are different forms of millet known to the Akikúyu as mu-kom'-bi, muim'-bi, u-gim'-bi. These are grown in comparatively small quantities.

All these grains are exotic, and the Akikúyu say have been derived from the "white man of very long ago," and have reached them in trade through the Akam'ba, the tribe situated between them and the coast. A chief told us his grandfather would have refused to touch maize, which is now the mainstay of the people. It is interesting to note, in the same way, that the European varieties of maize introduced since the English occupation, which at first the natives would not touch, are now becoming appreciated by them. This is slightly unfortunate from the point of view of the settler, who has to guard his crops from theft in a way formerly unnecessary.

Other crops that are grown are different forms of bean, n'já-hi, a small variety; m'bó-shi-o, the seed of which is  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. long; and n'já-gu, or pigeon-pea (*cajanus Indicus*?). This last is a shrub about 9 feet high, and is very largely grown. The fire-drill is often made of this wood. When the seed-pods have been gathered the bushes are pulled up and preserved for fuel.

The arum lily (Kik. n'dó-ma), the sweet potato (Kik.





BILL-ROARER (ke-nu ru ta) AND SING (ki gu-tha)

## PLATE XXXII

### BULL-ROARER AND SLING

1 Bull roarer consists of —

a The handle—a stick 26 in long

b A flat tongue of wood— $1\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{5}{8}$  in The long borders are sharpened to a cutting edge It is pierced at one end to carry

c The thong—made of bark twine

In use the thong is whirled round the head with the arm extended, and then twitched—not cracked like a whip When well handled it makes a loud sound of a character something between a pistol shot and the whoop of a motor syren Used to scare birds

2 A small, roughly made sling employed to hurl pellets of mud Made of bark twine woven by the fingers in the same manner as women weave their bags

Cf Pl XLIII p 78 b It is used from a platform erected in the centre of each plot of ripening grain

The principle of the sling is not employed in warfare or for any other purpose

a b 2 $\frac{1}{4}$  in

c d 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  in

e y = 12 in

d z 11 in

n'gwá-chi), the sugar-cane (Kik. kí-gwa, pl. í-gwa), are also cultivated. Plantations of manioc may be seen, and much resemble an English hop garden. Each vine trails over its supporting pole, which are situated about 12 feet apart.

The only fruit cultivated are bananas (Kik. ma-rí-go), of these there are many varieties, each differently esteemed. It is most difficult to recognise any difference in the plants, but the appearance and character of the fruit varies greatly.

Tobacco (Kik. m'bá-ki) is largely grown, both for home consumption, in the form of snuff, and also as an article of trade with the surrounding tribes.

The Castor Oil tree (Kik. ri-a-rí-ki) is cultivated, and the oil of the seeds used as grease for the skin and garments by those too poor to afford mutton fat.

## FLOCKS AND HERDS

As the Akikúyu are in the main, as has been seen, an agricultural people, most possess, in addition to their cultivated land, a certain number of goats and sheep: cattle are the chief property of the few. The live stock are prized for their value when alive, and for their flesh and hides when dead. They are appreciated, however, not so much as a source of food, but chiefly as being the embodiment of wealth. All that gold means to the European, his flocks and herds do to the Akikúyu: for them he would pawn his very soul, forgetful of the times that the possession of this form of wealth might improbably cost him his life. One of the chief objects of the accumulation of live stock is that they may be used for the purchase of wives. To those acquainted with the Akikúyu, perhaps the most realistic touch in the folk tales recorded lies in the answers given by the boy M'wam'bia to the mythical N'jen'gé. The animal whose life he has saved he asks him to state what he would like as reward. He asks first for goats and then for women. When his wishes have been cheerfully granted, and he is requested to say what next he desires, he replies, "Nothing more"!

The goat is taken as the unit of value. If a man wishes to buy a wife he must pay so many "goats," but the actual payment may take the form of cattle, sheep, and goats. So, too, in the purchase of ivory, negotiations used to be carried on in terms of goats. The fixed ratio of value of goats to cattle is as 13 to 1.

The total amount of *cattle* held by the Akikúyu has always been small. A herd the property of an individual may vary from ten to one hundred beasts.

Grazing ground in the heart of Kikúyu does not exist to any appreciable extent. It is therefore the general practice for herds to be sent to the confines of the cultivated land, where in certain parts there exist tracts which have been denuded by fire of thick forest growth. This ground is naturally covered by grass so dense that progress is only possible along the game tracks, whilst in height it sometimes reaches above the head of a man on horseback. In this sea of grass the rhino lives, and so it the Akikúyu set fire in the dry season, with the result that the country is gradually brought, and maintained, in a condition that permits of its being pastured by their cattle.

To these grounds the herds are sent, where they are placed at night in strong enclosures and guarded with unceasing vigilance, both at pasture and in the stockade, by a numerous armed escort to protect them from lions and raiders.

It has been said that the cattle of the Akikúyu are branded with a tribal mark. All inquiries that I have been able to make point to such brands being purely for identification, and dictated by the fancy of the owner. Occasionally some particular marking may be considered as "medicine," and to have protective power.<sup>1</sup>

The care of the cattle and everything connected with them is work that custom assigns to men and boys, and they are not supposed to drink other milk than that of the cow.

The calves are shut up apart from their mothers at night, and in the early morning the herd is milked to a moderate extent, and then the calves are permitted to suck their mothers dry. The cows will not give up their milk except in the presence of their calves; and should a calf die it is skinned, and the skin stuffed with grass: the cow licks it over and seems

<sup>1</sup> Cf Pl LXXXVII 9

## FLOCKS AND HERDS

satisfied, and permits her milk to flow. In the evening lves are turned loose as the herd approaches the home- and have the whole of the day's milk.

lking is done into a half calabash held with one hand. this it is poured into a long narrow gourd, which has usly been well rinsed out with cows' urine and then filled moke. The consequence of its thus being put into "dirty" ls, i.e. vessels in which the milk ferment is present, is immediately it is heated, with a view to sterilising it, it as up into curds and whey, whilst, if not heated, it quickly i sour. As the natives make no attempt at keeping it, drawbacks do not matter to them, but from the European elli's point of view it is a very serious evil. When attacked ysentery a supply of pure boiled milk is almost essential recovery, and even for bad fever it is most valuable; hence

most unfortunate that the natives often think that to : an animal into any vessel other than the usual half cala- i, e.g. into a European white enamelled bowl, is likely to e it go off its milk. Curds, whey, cream, butter, and cheese never prepared; in fact, the three latter are unknown.

The *sheep and goats* are pastured together, sometimes ompanied by a few odd cattle and calves, should the owner so happy as to possess such. Their grazing ground is

fallow land, which is sometimes referred to as "the session of the goats." The boys, when the country quiet, generally have charge of the smaller flocks; for a ck may be anything from ten or twenty sheep and goats to ee or four hundred, the joint property of neighbours. ery sheep and goat is marked not by any form of brand, t by mutilating the ear in some way. The flocks are counted ery morning and every evening as a matter of routine, so at, what between counting his goats and the contents of e lot bottle, our M'kikúyu is decidedly quick at figures.

It is a pretty sight to see the flocks brought home for the





IV S 1 phot

A CHILD'S PRESENT OF A GOAT AND KID



night. The mothers break into a trot as they climb the hillside on which the village stands, and call to their youngsters. The kids, perhaps as many as fifty in number, are liberated simultaneously by a woman from their common pound, and scamper for all they are worth through the low archway of growing greenery, which alone gives access to a Kikúyu homestead. They career like young rocking-horses down the short greensward without, helter-skelter, wagging their little tails, and often tumbling over each other in their eagerness, as they run straight to their mothers, whom all but the youngest recognise almost immediately.

Every sheep and goat is sheltered for the night in the hut occupied by the owners, and as the chill of sundown comes, they wend their way with calm assurance into their respective homes and stand round the fire in the centre, warming themselves, presently to jostle there with their owners. In the case of a heavy rain shower they assert themselves still more energetically. Eventually they are put away for the night on the floor under the bedsteads, but the visitor constantly tumbles over one in the perpetual gloom of a native hut. Their presence thus in the house is of the greatest value, as the alkali in their urine prevents the ingress of the burrowing flea or jigger. Where no goats are present, as in the case of very poor people, children and sick persons may be seen with their fingers and toes dropping off, in consequence of the jiggers in their hands and feet.

Every wife has her own house, and every house has its own quota of goats—the term “goat” being used indifferently by the Akikúyu for both sheep and goat. On these, though not in any sense her property, she has practically a lien, for they are those which, on some ground or other, she can claim on behalf of her own children against the other wives should her husband die. Ewes are not milked, but the she-goats are. Their milk is regarded as the perquisite of the women, and as such is used by

them for the young children This, however, amounts to no large quantity, as though the quality is rich and delicate the yield is small, and the larger proportion is required for the kids.

It is an interesting fact that unless the goats are kept well supplied with saline earth they will not give thick milk nor keep in condition. A trough containing such earth is found in every homestead (cf. p. 59 and Pl. xl. p. 66a).

## FOOD AND COOKERY

THE Akikúyu may be looked on as essentially vegetarians. Meat, in the form of beef, mutton, and goats' flesh, though it is frequently eaten, is the luxury of the few, and only partaken of in small quantity on occasions of sacrifice or festival.

As regards food, they are very conservative in their taste, and have a real repugnance to even try, when offered to them, any cereals or vegetables other than those they are accustomed to. White European bread and biscuits are not to their palate attractive ; sugar and salt are.

This last, in its refined white European form, is always, by strangers, suspected of being poison, and refused. They, however, accept with avidity the crude yellow-brown crystals, with plenty of coral grit amongst them, which is the trade article, and obtained by the evaporation of sea water.

## ANIMAL FOOD

Theoretically, certain of the Akikúyu clans are by custom allowed to eat a few sorts of wild game, but practically no M'kikúyu who has not been much in contact with the game-eating N'doróbo or Akam'ba, will touch it. If he does, he is looked on by his fellows as a pariah. Nothing but dire starvation will induce the Akikúyu to try to eat wild meat, and then, being unaccustomed to flesh in any quantity, they are soon attacked by dysentery.

Birds, reptiles, insects, and grubs of any sort are never

eaten the locust and the white flying ant are not recognised as edible. As regards fish, it is specifically laid down, by custom and tradition, that the eating of it makes a person ceremonially unclean.

Eggs, too, are not used as food. The Akikúyu give as their reason for not keeping fowls, that the crowing of the cocks would betray the whereabouts of their homesteads to raiding parties.

Cattle, sheep, and goats, even when they die a natural death, are eaten. On very great occasions a bull is killed for food. The favourite animal for slaughter is a full grown castrated ram that has been kept in the dark under his mistress's bedstead for three months and fed on sweet potato tops. He is the only animal in the country that ever gets really fat, and his tail whereon his fat chiefly tends to accumulate grows to the size and weight of one of his hind legs. He goats are castrated with the view to ultimate slaughter, but it is not customary to fatten them in the same way.

Animals are not killed until they reach maturity, and it is unusual to kill any female such being reserved for breeding.

#### MANNER OF SLAUGHTER

The Kikuyu manner of slaughter, in the case of sheep or goat, is as follows —

The animal is held as it stands, or is thrown to the ground. The nostrils are then closed by grasping the muzzle with one hand whilst its windpipe is tightly pinched with the other. A sheep makes no struggle or resistance, and in a very short time is dead or almost so. It is then placed across a man's knees in a resting attitude, with its fore feet tucked under its breast, and a sword is thrust into the root of the neck. Thereupon nearly all the blood in the body escapes, and is collected into a calabash held to receive it.

A knowledge of this method of slaughter is of practical importance, as the cook and boys of the traveller are usually Swahilis from the coast, to whom, as Mohammedans, meat killed in this way is uneatable. Mutton thus made for the white man's table, and for presents to his Kikúyu friends, does not somehow disappear with the remarkable celerity that is so usually the case when the beast has had its throat cut by the hand of the True Believer.

### METHODS OF COOKING FLESH

Broiling on a wooden grid is the customary way of cooking flesh. Occasionally, however, a small portion may be roasted on a spit stuck into the ground. Boiled meat is never eaten by men, but the natives say that women make a sort of Irish stew with meat and vegetables when given a sheep, as a special luxury, after child-birth.

While the sheep or goat is being killed and the blood collected, a large fire is made and stirred, so as to rapidly break down into a mass of glowing embers. When it has become such, at one end of the fire two Y-shaped sticks are driven into the ground, say 3 ft. apart. In the fork of each of these rests the extremity of a rod some 4 ft. long. The same thing is done at the other end of the fire. Then transversely across the face of the glowing mass of embers are laid some half-dozen other bars to form the grid. Of these the ends are supported by the two bars first mentioned. Made of green sticks of suitable strength, this grid neither sags with its load nor catches fire, though removed but some 3 in. from the hot coals.

The joints and black puddings are then placed on it and turned about occasionally: no attempt is made to baste them

by boiling, and eaten hot. Often small quantities of maize and different beans are added, and the mass, when cold, is employed as a food when travelling.

M'WE'-LI and the other kinds of millet are usually rubbed down into flour, as otherwise they have a scouring effect. They are employed in making gruel. They are also carried about unground, and eaten by odd mouthfuls when travelling.

BEANS (KIK. N'JA'-HI; M'BO'-SHI-O; N'JU'-GU;  
THO-RO'-KO; THU'-U)

These different species of bean are not rubbed into flour, but are boiled, either separately or mixed with maize, and eaten either hot or in the form of a cold cake. The pods containing the young seeds are never used as a green vegetable as with us.

#### METHOD OF MAKING FLOUR

The method of making flour is as follows: The grain is first placed in a wooden mortar (ki-nó) formed from a short length of the trunk of a tree, hollowed out for about 20 in. at one end, and of which the other is sunk into the ground, leaving the hollowed-out portion alone above it. A heavy wooden pestle, some 5 ft. long, is used, with a stabbing action, to bruise the grain. When this has been done it is brought to the rubbing stones. These are two flat slabs of granite, of which the lower one, about 24 in. long, 16 in. wide, and 3 in. thick, forms the bed or table. The upper stone or rubber is some 18 in. long, 9 in. wide, and 3 in. thick. In use, the larger stone is let into the ground so that one end may be raised a few inches. Behind this raised end the woman kneels. She places a handful of the bruised grain on the

upper end of the slab, lays the rubbing stone transversely across the lower, and holding it by its extremities, and raising one edge, brings a certain amount of grain betwixt the two. She then suddenly throws her weight forwards and downwards whilst stiffening her arms. The upper stone is thus made to travel over the face of the lower, whilst the material betwixt them is reduced to a fine meal. In 1906 the market value of 60 lbs. of meal thus prepared was goods to the value of 2s. 8d., and forty such loads were prepared at three days' notice on one occasion without its being considered anything out of the common. On  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of maize, or of any of the different forms of meal, varied, say, every third day by beans, a man will keep contented and in good condition, making 15 miles per diem under a 50 lb. load, and do so for many weeks.

It is very desirable that any traveller or resident in Kikúyu should at the earliest opportunity learn to recognise these different seeds, and make himself acquainted with their peculiar dietetic qualities. He must know, too, what vessels will be required for cooking them, the way in which each sort of food has to be dealt with prior to cooking, and the length of time that is required to prepare a meal from each.

The leader of a "safari" (caravan) is respectfully addressed "my father," but he will find that his family of perhaps a couple of hundred hungry porters will soon lose all affection for their parent, and desert him in the middle of nowhere, if, by want of knowledge or forethought, he offers to feed them on unground m'wé-li, or condemns them to a diet of beans many days in succession.

## FRUIT

The only cultivated fruit is the banana. Certain sorts of them are eaten unripe, whilst the pulp is still quite hard. These are peeled and thrown on the embers to roast. Another kind is allowed to grow ripe on the tree. The peel of these remains quite green, but the pulp becomes soft and ripe. Yet another variety is cut and plunged into the store of newly ground m'tá-ma flour, or buried in the ground in a large pot. The rind of these turns yellow and the fruit has a delicate flavour. This burying is, however, only an occasional practice.

Though the banana is universally grown wherever possible, it is not more than a subsidiary element of the food-supply.

To say that there are no wild edible fruits or roots is, practically speaking, an accurate statement. The poverty of this part of the world in this respect is quite remarkable. At no time of the year can a man keep himself alive on wild vegetable produce.

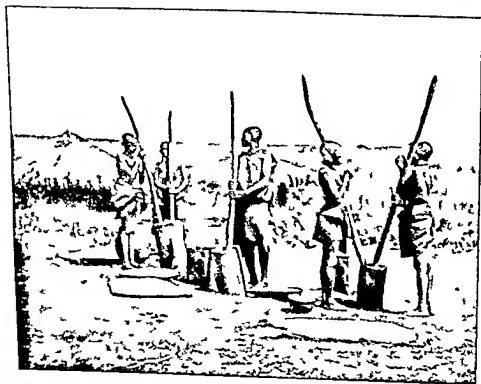
At the higher elevations the blackberry and the raspberry grow rankly, but fruit but little. Still, they are recognised as edible and gathered by the passer-by. The "elephant berries" of the Lai-kí-pi-a plains yield an occasional handful.

Now and then a fruit like a green medlar is met with, and again there is a large forest tree whose fruit contain pips that are sucked for an adhesive sweet pulp with which they are coated. But all the foregoing are only gathered for the pastime of the idle moment.

## HONEY

*Honey*, of which the Akikúyu are exceedingly fond, is collected everywhere. All over the country, where inhabited, may be seen isolated trees. In every tree is one, and some-





A R p h t

## WOMEN POUNDING GRAIN

In mortars formed of sections of tree trunks. The butt of each mortar is set into the ground slightly out of the vertical. The mortar is hollowed out by means of an axe blade set into the extremity of a heavy shaft like one of the pounding sticks here represented.



A A 181

# KIKUYU RUBBING STONES IN USE

The grain is being rubbed into flour, in the Kikuyu manner by the kneeling figure

Scene Servants quarters author's camp

*W S R phot*

## BEE-BOX OR HIVE

From the side of a steep bank a stunted specimen of the African oak is growing and overhanging a wet valley beneath. The two main stems of the tree are united by a dead branch lashed to each, and to it the bee-box is secured.



A R P

## WOMAN MAKING GRUEL

Illustration shows — The way in which the Kil yu pot is supported on three stones and the fire afterwards is started beneath it

A half gourd used as a dish is behind the standing figure. The woman cooking is wearing bead hoops in cartilage of ear Pl c Fig 5 p 140 e

Collar and chain Pl xvi Fig 1 p 32 k

Numerous long necklaces of woven cords

Bracelets and broad garters of iron wire

Both figures are clad alike. The Pl illustrates the adaptability of the garments to the requirements of the moment

times half a dozen, bee-boxes, placed there for the wild bees to build their comb in, secure from the attacks of the different honey-eating birds.

These boxes are formed from short lengths of trunks of trees, hollowed out by means of the blade of an axe set into the end of a shaft some 6 ft. long, and weighing altogether about 6 lbs., so as to form a chisel, for no curved cutting tool of the nature of a gouge is known. The timber chosen is some soft wood, often a mimosa, the girth twice the size of a man's body, and about 5 ft. in length. The exterior is first wrought into a true cylinder by adzing with an axe, and then one end of the length of tree trunk is set upright in the ground at a suitable depth and angle. The workman—for the making of bee-boxes is always the work of a man—now proceeds to remove, by successive stabs, all the wood from the centre of the trunk. Eventually he obtains a hollow shell a couple of inches thick. This is nicely dressed externally with the axe. Round the margin of each extremity, on the inner aspect, a deep groove is cut about 2 ins. from its edge, into which flat boards, each one obtained by adzing down a solid tree trunk, are fitted. The finished article looks like a properly headed-up barrel. No holes are intentionally made anywhere to admit the bees; these find their way in through the interstices in the fitting of the end-pieces. As many as half a dozen of these bee-boxes may be seen at a large native market on sale. They are laid upon suitable forked branches in the isolated tree, and secured in place by lashings of tough creepers. In the case of new boxes, bunches of sweet-smelling flowers are tied to one extremity when it is first put in place. The idea is to attract the bees to it.

A peculiarity of the Akikúyu is never to suspend their boxes beneath the branch, by means of a span and bridle, as the Akam'ba do. Considering that they trace their descent from the Akam'ba, this point is worthy of notice. In some

parts of Kikúyu, towards the Akam'ba border, the bee-boxes are ornamented by simple designs in poker work. In the part of the country here described such is never done, though it is usual for a man to brand his box with a clan design.

Theft of honey from these boxes, which may be miles from the owner's home, is a recognised offence of a serious character.

The honey is gathered by night. The bees are driven out of their hives by holding smoked torches beneath the box. The honey is then collected into leathern bags. It is eaten in the condition in which it happens to be obtained, often black with age and smoko, and mixed with much broken comb. No attempt is made at separation or purification. From it a form of drink is prepared.

## SALT

No saline deposits are known in Kikúyu. A small amount of coarse salt has, for long past, been obtained on the border of the country from caravans passing to the northward to Ugan'da, and some too, perhaps, by way of trade through the Akam'ba, but the people generally have had to content themselves with the ash obtained by burning the papyrus rush. In many places the winding valley between two hills forms a marsh which is covered by an impenetrable growth of this grass, which rises to a height of 12 ft. or more. The smouldering fires of the ash-gatherers are still to-day to be seen, even in the opened-out districts, and their product to be purchased in the markets, but trade salt is now rapidly displacing it.

The Alíkúyu do not, however, seem to experience any especial craving for salt, though they much appreciate it as a gift. With a thimbleful of salt doled out by the crystal, and a like amount of snuff by the pinch, it is easy to keep a wayside

acquaintance alert and vivacious for hours, and to gather all the scandal of the neighbourhood.

The clay lying beneath the surface mould in certain marshes, and in the face of past and present river banks, has in the past been excavated by elephants and other game. To some of these places the Akikúyu drive their flocks to lick the saline earth. They also make it up into flat cakes of 20 lbs. each, to take home or to sell in the markets. Every homestead has, on its surrounding green, a trough some 8 to 20 ft. long, hollowed out of a tree trunk. The saline clay is broken up in this with a little water, when the flocks greedily lick it up. The owners consider this clay essential to the health of their animals, and all over the country this practice maintains, the natives going to great expense and trouble to procure it, but it is not used as human food.

Of whets to the appetite the Akikúyu know nothing.

## THE KITCHEN

All cooking, except that of meat, is done by the women. They cultivate the ground, gather the proceeds for use, and transport it home. They fetch the firewood too: a great labour, and also the water. The cooking is usually done on small fires outside the hut for convenience, but sometimes it is done inside. There are no ceremonies nor rites connected with the fire at which cooking is done, nor with any other form of fire. Roasting is not practised, nor is frying. Baking in any form is unknown. Cooking amongst hot embers, grilling, boiling, and stewing are, as has been seen, recognised methods of preparing food.

Pots are described under Pottery. They vary in size from  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon to 4 or 5 gallons. There are only two shapes. No form of lid, or stopper is made for them. Though they

have lugs they are never suspended over the fire, nor is any form of ring made for their rounded bottoms. Each is set betwixt three stones, and the fire built beneath. No food can be cooked in or eaten from a cracked pot; to do so makes a person ceremonially unclean, and involves an expensive purification. The narrow-necked vessels are only used as receptacles for fluids. The lack of covers or lids is made good by closing the mouth of cooking pots when in use with a mass of green leaves.

Calabashes or gourds of different sizes, bisected longitudinally, form the only dishes and receptacles for food. Food is eaten out of one common dish. A native hut, i.e. the home of one wife, will have three or four earthenware pots, half a dozen half-calabashes of different sizes as dishes, and a couple of gourd flasks, each fitted with sling and leather cap, to carry milk or gruel when absent from home. Cooking vessels are not formally cleansed: the nature of the work they do renders such unnecessary.

Stirring in cooking is done with a stick. A special whisk, made like the butt of an arrow plumed with strips of leather, is used for stirring up the gruel in the long narrow gourd in which it is carried on a journey, and may sometimes be found in a man's quiver. Messes, however, made of flour are prepared of such a consistency that they may either be drunk as a soup from the dish, or else gathered up as a bolus with the fingers, and so carried to the mouth.

No form of kitchen middens exist, nor are they being formed. The character of the food and the nature of Kikúyu customs alike preclude any such formation.



## MEALS

The only formal meal of the day is that partaken of at sundown. It is eaten usually outside the hut, but inside the enclosure. The morning meal is some that has been kept over from supper. Men and women never eat together. A woman is not allowed to see a man eat meat, still less does she cook it for him.

No knife, spoon, or fork are employed with any dish. If a piece of meat wants dividing it is chopped in half with the *touch of a sword point*.

The principal man hands to each diner in order of precedence his portion. No one exhibits any eagerness to begin, nor hurries with what has been given him, nor asks for a further help. If the meal is meat, however, the whole on the grid is generally distributed at first. It is the rule to eat slowly. The first mouthful taken must be spat out on to the ground. *Benedictus benedicat*. In a general way only equals in rank eat together.

## FORMS OF DRINK

No kind of drink accompanies a meal. A man drinks when he is thirsty. Many porters on the march drink cold water freely: on a known road they reserve themselves for particular sources of supply as being the most palatable. The Akikáyu have no idea of preventing water becoming contaminated. The consequence is that the rivers and brooks become abominably polluted with the rush of the first rains, and much dysenteric trouble ensues. The Government officials could do an immense amount of good by simply proclaiming the sanctity of water. The natives quite realise

the effect of contamination, and would welcome the enforcement of the most stringent rules at the different Government stations.

### GRUEL (M'-'THON'-A)

Watery Gruel is largely drunk cold by all in daily life, and is much liked. In the manner and extent of use, and in the consideration in which it is held, it occupies much the same place as beer does amongst our labouring classes.

It is made from any of the smaller grains mentioned, rubbed down into flour, but from maize it is not made. Supplies of gruel may frequently be seen being carried about in large narrow-necked calabashes containing up to 5 gallons, the mouth being stoppered with a screw of sweet leaves. It is not made as an article for sale.

### NATIVE BEER (N'JO'-HI)

This is the pure juice of the sugar-cane slightly fermented. No water is added to it, either in manufacture or in use. It is the chief alcoholic drink of the Akikúyu. It has a slightly acid taste yet somewhat resembles a soft cider. A quart would be a reasonable amount for a man to take. On it the natives sometimes become intoxicated to the extent of becoming muddle-headed, garrulous, noisy, or treacherously aggressive, but they do not seem to be inclined to become sleepy or physically incapable. Still their friends recognise them as being under alcoholic influence and treat them accordingly. Drunkenness is not considered ludicrous, and a sot is despised. No man is allowed to drink n'jô-hi before he has attained the position of an elder; the idea does not seem to attract the younger men, who never express any wish or exhibit any inclination to be allowed to partake.



H. S. R. 1911

#### NATIVE BEER-MAKING.

Shows an end view of the tree trunk, in which are excavated a series of shallow mortars for pounding the cane. Down its length the women stand alternately—not facing one another.

The peculiar habit of crossing the legs when standing at ease is seen in the case of the boy on the left.

The large platters (Pl. LVIII. Fig. 1, p. 98 b) are used to carry the pounded pulp to a group of men near by (not shown) whose duty it is to wring out the juice.

The white material on the ground is the snow-white sticks of peeled cane cut into short lengths ready for pounding.

Occasionally formal drinking parties are summoned by a chief, which are very serious functions. Every step at these meetings is taken in exact accordance with precedent established by custom. They are called in order that important news may be imparted to all in the most formal manner. Hence everybody who is anybody is invited, and takes care to be present. Such a party, summoned by a chief to present me to his people as a close friend and ally, is described somewhat fully on p. 200.

N'jó-hi is made as follows :—

The trunk of a large tree, some 10 to 20 ft. long, and 18 in. or more in diameter, is roughly squared on three sides and bedded firmly into the ground, whilst at the same time rising above it to a convenient height. The upper surface is then wrought flat, with the exception of a strong edge 3 in. deep and as much wide, which runs all the way round. On this surface, at intervals of about 18 in. apart, cup-shaped cavities forming mortars are worked. They are about 9 in. across and 6 in. depth. Such a log may be seen anywhere, the explanation being that it lies where it fell. The pestles employed are about 6 ft. long, weigh about 10 lbs., are clubbed at the end, and resemble the Indian club of the gymnasium with a long and much stouter shaft.

The sugar-cane when cut is forthwith stripped of its dark hard outer surface with a sharpened *kaí-hu* or *si-me*. The now snow-white sticks are made up into bundles and carried by the women to the log, together with a quantity of strong twine, some large platters, half calabashes of large size, and large gourd bottles for storage of the juice. The cane, cut into short lengths, is now thrown into the trough; the women range themselves on either side alternately, and one gives the lead by driving her pestle into her mortar and starting an impromptu song. In the next stroke she makes she is

## MANUFACTURE OF NATIVE BEER

ompanied by the others, who take the time from her, and  
lorse, in the form of a chorus, the sentiments expressed by  
soloist.

As soon as a portion of the cane is crushed it is piled up  
the great platters (hi-ta-rú-ru) and carried to the men, who  
around the large half calabashes in order to wring out the  
ce. Each man holds in his left hand a stick, the size of a  
ger and about 10 in. long, to one end of which a few yards  
strong bark string is attached. He rests the stick against  
o face of the pile of pounded cane, and opening his hand  
asps the mass of pulp in the centre of which now lies the  
ck with its string dependent. He then passes the string  
th the right hand up and down the length of the stick.  
e result is a spindle-shaped mass of pulp secured round the  
ntral stick by a number of strings passing over its surface.  
is spindle he now takes in his two hands and slowly wrings  
er the calabash. When no more juice flows the string is  
st off from around the mass, and the dry snow-white fibre  
at formed the spindle falls from its central stick axis to the  
ound. The whole mass is thus treated. From the calabash  
shes the juice is ladled into large narrow-necked gourds, and  
ken home. Into it is then placed some of the dried pods of  
e alofa tree. These are sold in the native markets split  
nd dried. The effect of the introduction of this fruit is, the  
atives say, to set up fermentation. Next morning, i.e. in  
bout eighteen hours from being expressed, the juice is ready  
or drinking.

It is stated that another form of alcoholic drink is made.  
Water is added to honey in the proportion of two parts of  
water to one of honey. The strained fluid is ready for  
drinking in less than twenty-four hours. Neither of these  
beverages remains potable for more than a day. As might be  
anticipated, that made from honey is much the more in-  
oxicating.

## EPITOME OF KIKÚYU FOOD

The dishes of Kikúyu cookery are few :—

1. Black pudding or sausage is made from the blood, mixed with pieces of fat, meat, kidney, heart, and other viscera chopped up small and placed in the stomach, and into lengths of the great intestine. These are first secured with a skewer, and then tied with a strip of the tough inner bark of a bush.

2. Meat broiled as previously described.

3. Plain boiled maize or beans (the hard seeds), or the tubers of the arum lily and its green stems.

4. A stiff hasty pudding or cake made by boiling together mixed grains, whole beans, and flours. It is eaten hot or cold, and is a favourite food to carry on a journey.

5. Parched maize ; also a small grain like canary seed eaten raw.

6. Honey mixed with plenty of broken comb.

7. Sugar-cane peeled and chewed.

The beverages are :—

1. Thin gruel.

2. Native beer, i.e. fermented sugar-cane juice or mead.

## ARTS AND CRAFTS

### HUT-BUILDING

THE Kikúyu hut (nyum'-ba) is a strong, comfortable, well-built structure, admirably adapted to the requirements of its users.

It lends itself to the employment of any form of vegetable growth available, and it demands no tool as essential for its construction, though the universal digging and slashing knife (ká-hi-yu) is always, as a matter of fact, employed. Every hut, large and small, is constructed in exactly the same way. Its merits are manifold, as will be pointed out later ; its chief faults are lack of light, and of any means of ventilation beyond the door.

To build a hut the following is the procedure :—

*Marking out the Site.*—A circular mark, about 15 ft. in diameter, is scratched into the ground on the site selected. No guide beyond the eye is used.

*Digging the inner Ring of Holes.*—Holes, nineteen in number, equidistant from one another, are then dug in the line of the scratch. Each hole is made by stabbing the digging-knife or a pointed stick into the ground, and removing with the hand the earth so loosened. A hole is thus rapidly made, of any depth desired up to the length of a man's arm, and yet only large enough for the arm to pass down it, whilst the surrounding soil remains undisturbed.

*Setting up the Inner Ring of Posts* —Into each of the nineteen holes is placed a post the size of the wrist, and bifurcated at its

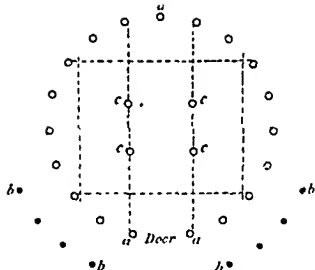


FIG. I DIAGRAM TO SHOW SYSTEM OF BUILDING A HUT

*a, a, a, a.* Wall-posts.

*b, b, b, b.* Posts to support the eaves.

*c, c, c, c.* Central pillars to carry weight of roof

- - - indicate the ties passing from wall-plate to wall-plate.

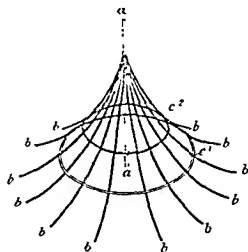


FIG. II DIAGRAM OF FRAME FOR APEX OF ROOF

*a, a* The axial stake.

*b, b.* Rods that are lashed to ends of rafters

*c¹* Main hoop on which the frame is built

*c²* Supplementary hoop to give rigidity.



upper end. These posts rise above the level of the ground about 4 ft.

*Setting up Interior Pillars to carry the Roof.*—An oblong is next marked off in the centre of the circle, 3 ft. by 4 ft. 6 in. At each corner of this figure four posts, of the thickness of the PL upper arm, are similarly set up. These likewise have their free extremities bifurcated, and stand above the ground some 5 ft.

*Material employed for Lashings.*—A shrub known as kam'-ba supplies the place of string or rope. Its habit of growth is in the form of straight shoots some 8 to 12 ft. high, like hazel wands. Throughout the year the bark strips readily. It grows in great profusion. The wands are cut; the bark at the end of the stick freed with the thumbnail or teeth, and then, with one pull, the whole of the bark leaves the rod to the very tip. Bundles of bark are thus prepared as required.

*Preparation of Frame for Apex of Roof.*—A strong hoop, PL some 3 ft. in diameter, is made of pliant rods bound together till they form a roll rather thicker than the wrist. This hoop, when completed, is laid flat upon the ground. Into the earth, at the centre of the hoop, is driven a stake, sharpened at both ends, some 4 ft. long. The smaller ends of a number of pliant rods are now lashed to the middle of this axial stake. Then, one by one, each rod is forced towards the ground, so as to take a curve with the convexity directed downwards, and then each rod in its turn is lashed to the hoop at the point where it crosses it. Further rigidity is presently secured by adding another ring midway between the first one and the axial stake.

A framework is thus obtained that in shape resembles the bloom of the convolvulus, whilst the axial stake may be likened to the stalk of the blossom.

This framework will presently be required in the construction of the roof, of which it forms the summit of the dome.

From every roof in Kikúyu the axial stake may be noticed projecting as a terminal some 2 ft. or more high.

*The Wall-Plate or Curb-Plate.*—Into and around the Y-shaped upper ends of the wall-posts are then bent long pliant rods. These, when interwoven; form a ring of great strength. On this ring the sticks that support the load of thatch will presently rest.

*The Walls.*—When the curb-plate has been finished, the walls are filled in with fine wattling, smaller uprights being introduced between the main uprights as required. When the hut has been completed this wall is daubed with clay: not with cattle dung. Sometimes the wall is made of planks set on end, and applied edge to edge, but such is only seen in the case of a wealthy man in a forest district. The peculiar method of making these planks will be dealt with elsewhere.

*The Rafters in relation to the Terminal of Apex of Roof.*—The rafters or roof poles, in the form of long tapering saplings, whose butts are about the thickness of the wrist, are now rested on the wall-plate, and lashed to it with strips of bark. Below and beyond the wall-plate these ends project for some 4 ft., to form the eaves, while their smaller ends are brought together in the centre to form a conical roof with a pitch of 40 degrees. The frame to form the apex, previously constructed, is now adjusted into position, and the small ends of some of the rafters lashed to it, the upper end of a rafter in each case being laid parallel to one of the vertical rods of which the frame is composed.

*Provision for the Attachment of Thatch.*—Flexible rods are now woven, and at the same time twisted, around the rafters, so as to form complete hoops or horizontal bands, which embrace each rafter in the substance of a form of wooden rope. The interval between each of these bands depends on the length of the thatching material to be employed, but is usually about

18 in. The strongest and most carefully-applied band is that which embraces the butts of the rafters, and forms the edge of the eaves.

*Provision to support the Eaves.*—It has been stated that the rafters project some 4 ft. beyond the wall-plate to form a deep eave or verandah; also, that their butts are connected together with a specially strong woven and twisted band of flexible rods. At intervals of about 4 ft. holes are now dug beneath the extremities of rafters. Each hole is of such a depth that a post with a forked head can be slipped into it, and then raised upwards from the bottom of the hole sufficiently to take the weight of the rafter. The hole is then gradually filled with earth and well rammed, which drives the earth beneath the heel of the post, and compels it to carry its load.

*Transverse Rods.*—From the curb-plate on one side, resting in the L-shaped ends of two of the centre posts, down to the curb-plate on the opposite side, runs an arch of strong, flexible rods carried beneath the rafters, and lashed to them.

The other two central posts carry a similar arch resting on their Y-shaped extremities.

Four supplementary bands complete the framework of the roof.

*Thatching.*—A number of loads of reeds, flags, or long grass, carefully cut and bound into long, conical bundles, tapering to a point, and each weighing perhaps ninety pounds, are now brought in and thrown down near the house. One by one they are opened; and the material made up into a number of wisps, each containing as much as can be grasped in the two hands. Each wisp is carefully tied at its butt with a scrap of tying-bark (kam'-ba).

Some hundreds of these having been got ready, thatching now begins. To the lowest hoop or band that embraces the lower ends of the rafters they are, one by one, securely tied,

with the thick end, or *butt* of the wisp, *downwards*. A complete circle of closely applied wisps is thus completed.

Another circle is now commenced, but the wisps or sheaves of grass in this case, as in all future ones, have their butts *upwards*, being lashed to the roof hoop next in series, whilst the free brush like ends project well beyond the eaves. The thatching, having been once started in this way, is gradually carried upwards by tying down circle after circle of wisps of grass, each overlapping that beneath it, and each having its butt upwards. A thoroughly good thatched roof is thus arrived at. It resists decay in a wonderful way, for the white ants and other destructive creatures do not attack it in consequence of the smoke that permeates throughout the whole of it from the fire beneath.

*The Door* —There is no window, nor is there any provision for the exit of smoke. It seems somehow to leak away through the whole surface of the roof. The door is always made the same shape and size. It is a neatly woven wattle hurdle made from a tough creeper. At night it is set up against the entrance on the inner side and there firmly secured by wedging a strong piece of timber between its inner face and the nearest of the four inner pillars (c c).

*The Fireplace* —Into the forks of these pillars are laid two cross bars and on the cross bars are laid horizontally broad planks, so as to form a ceiling to that part of the roof comprised within the four pillars. On the floor beneath are three stones,<sup>1</sup> betwixt which the fire is made whilst the upper surface of the boards form a platform on which firewood and articles are laid. This ceiling is obviously a great safe guard against a conflagration the possibility of which however, never seems to be taken into account by the Akikúyu who do not hesitate to throw on small sticks in quantity to make a brilliant blaze when temporary illumination is desired.

<sup>1</sup> See Marriage Customs p. 131



*W S R phot*

THE DOOR OF A HUT

Being taken to the home of the purchaser by the craftsman who has made it.

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*General Summary.*—A house, such as described, built of good materials, will last a lifetime, with occasional repairs, provided it be occupied. If, however, it be deserted, it will entirely disappear in the course of a few years under the ravages of white ants and boring beetles.

## BRIDGE-BUILDING

Kikúyu is a land of streams. Coming from the mountains near at hand, they are liable to sudden rises and fallings of considerable amount. Their rocky channels, cut through mountain gorges, will not permit of overflow, whilst at the same time the gradient is considerable. Hence, with a very small rise of water, the force of the current renders a ford dangerous or impassable. The people have in consequence become expert bridge-builders. Should circumstances permit, a tree is felled so that it shall fall across the stream and rest on either shore. This, however, can only be done where cliff-like banks rise above flood level, or the trunk would be swept away on the occasion of the first thunderstorm in the mountains above. This form of bridge is consequently only seen in the wilder parts. The usual form of bridge, however, is a suspension one: a sort of spider's-web of creepers carried from one tree to another. It is often no easy matter to recognise it. As paths were made as unobtrusive as possible for purposes of defence, so a bridge was for choice constructed in a spot and in a manner calculated to screen it from observation.

A first-class bridge would be built thus :—

The biggest and tallest tree available is felled and axed flat on one surface. In drying, it often takes more or less of a twist, so that when one part of the flat surface looks upward, the remainder of the flat surface faces somewhat to the right or



*H S K phot*

A TREE-TRUNK BRIDGE OVER THE CHA' NI-A RIVER  
NEAR NYERI

A warrior, with the scabbard of his sword well shown,  
is watching the photographer from the middle of the  
bridge



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to the left. Should this defect be very pronounced, another smaller piece is sewn to it, so as to make good the defect. Should no larger tree be available to make a footway, a spindle-shaped fascine of sticks and creepers supplies its place. Thus is the footway made. The width may vary from the breadth of a man's foot to a plank broad enough for a cow to traverse.

A pair of strong posts—tree trunks with the first bifurcation of the branches left on—are then set up a few feet apart on one bank—and are connected by a heavy crossbar. On this crossbar one end of the foot-plank rests.

By the side of the posts that carry the crossbar are erected another pair of fairly strong tree trunks, each some 30 ft. or more above the ground.

To each of these tall posts two cords may for the present be said to be attached: the first cord is attached to the post at a point some 18 ft. above the level of the foot-plank or foot-rope, forming a hand-rail as it were; the second cord is attached to the upper extremity of the post—its use will presently be explained. Every 12 in. or so along the length of the cord referred to as the "hand-rail," a large number of smaller cords are attached, which vary in lengths in accordance with the sag of the hand-rail. The lower extremity of these short lengths are attached to the footway. Hence, the weight of the footway, and any load that may be placed on the footway, is thus carried by the "hand-rail."

The second cord, previously stated to have been attached to the upper extremity of the 30-foot post, is now carried somewhat beyond the middle point of the "hand-rail," thus taking part of the weight of the load. Many other cords similarly pass between points along the "hand-rail rope" and the vertical post of its own side.

What has been said of one end or half of the bridge, equally applies to the other.



JALU SUSPENSION B

A series of Y-shaped uprights and crossbars form an inclined plane of varying length from the ground to the commencement of the foot-plank.

From these short posts that thus carry the approach, stays are carried to the tall 30-foot posts that support the "hand-rail" ropes, in order to meet the strain put upon them by the weight of the bridge transmitted to them.

The whole structure is made of tree trunks and of tough creepers. Every part yields till each cord comes to do some share of the work. The result is admirable, as all that is sought is attained by the simplest means. The soundness of the principle and practice is shown by the fact that in the grounds of the Staff College at Camberley is a large demonstration bridge constructed of planks, posts, and wire, identical otherwise in every respect with that of the Akikúyu. In other words, our sappers cannot evolve anything better.

The suspension bridge shown (Plate xlv.) illustrates one where the footway was made of a rope of sticks. This had done so much work that the footway had stretched until the whole thing was admitted by all to be about to fall to pieces; yet, under the pressure of necessity, I managed, by strict discipline, to pass about four hundred men, with their women and goats, over it in a steady stream, and still it did not part.

When such a bridge is carried between two great leafy trees growing on either side of a river, and often with their branches almost touching, it almost defies detection. Another great point in favour of these bridges is, that with a few touches of an axe pursuit can be checked. The approaches, too, are often covered by war-pits to cool the impetuosity of raiders.

## FIRE MAKING

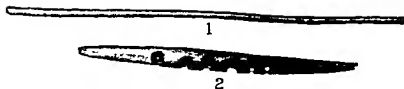
No tradition or explanation of the origin of fire exists amongst the Akikuyu, nor has it any place in social or religious ceremony. It is produced in one way only—by the friction between two pieces of wood. The implements for making it vary but slightly in pattern.

The *Upper*, or *Drill*, stick (u lin'-di) is a straight rod like a lead pencil, 13 in to 24 in in length, and 1 in to 1½ in in circumference. The lower end is convex. When using the longer drills of 24 in, the palms of the hands are not applied more than two thirds of the way up. It may perhaps be well here to explain that to obtain fire by the friction between two pieces of wood it is essential that one shall be hard and the other soft, of which the harder shall be the drill. Again, not any drill will do with any fire stick. The texture of the wood of the one has to bear a certain relation to the texture of the wood of the other in order to produce fire. The Akikuyu say, in explanation, that "one is the man and the other is the woman." The upper or drill stick (u lin'di) may be made of the wood of the following trees —

Ni u gu o, Mu lin di ki, Mu gu mu, Mu chú gu, Mu gi o, Ru gu tu or Ka gu tu (? Vernonia Sp), Mu cha sa (Vernonia Sp), Mu li ka (? Vernonia Sp)

The *Lower* or *Fire* stick (jé ka) is made of an altogether different wood. It is of the pulverised tissues of this stick that the tinder is formed, and gradually brought to a glow by the friction of the drill.

It is oval in sections, 9 in to 12½ in long by 1½ in to 2½ in in circumference, flattened on its lower aspect, and tapered to a point at either extremity. On the upper surface of its middle third, about half a dozen cavities the size of half a pea, are formed to receive the end of the drill. The wall of each



*Brit Mus (R.)*

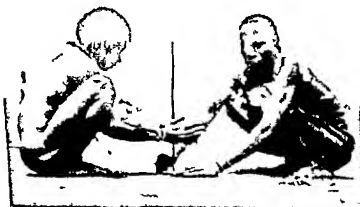
FIRE-MAKING

1. Upper or Drill stick.
2. Lower or Fire stick.

# FIRE-MAKING

Shows —

- 1 Method of holding the drill stick prior to beginning work—*i.e.*, by the thumb and finger tips of right hand, and by the third and fourth fingers of the left hand
- 2 The opposed palms in their downward course are here approaching the limit of their range
- 3 The method of returning the palms to the top of the drill stick—
  - (*a*) The *left hand* by third and fourth fingers presses the point of the drill firmly downwards into the cavity of the fire stick
  - (*b*) The *right hand* has been thrown upwards to the top of the drill which it is now in the act of grasping, in order that it may presently do the work now being done by the left—*i.e.*, of pressing the point of the drill into the cavity in the fire stick, whilst its companion travels upwards to be again opposed to it





cavity is cut down to its bottom at one point, and a tiny gutter made to proceed from it. Down this gutter the pulverised woody fibre insensibly trickles as it escapes from beneath the drill. None of it remains in the cavity of the fire stick.

This lower block or fire stick may be made of the wood of the following trees :—

Mu-rin'-ga ; Mu-chú-gu ; Mu-i-goí-a ; Mu-té-i (? Vernonia) ; Mu-ré-vu.

To make fire, two natives proceed as follows : One from his quiver takes his drill and fire stick. From his scabbard he draws his sword. They sit on their heels opposite to one another. The sword lies on the ground between them, its point directed towards the man about to use the drill. The assistant then firmly holds the fire stick transversely across and a little above the tip of the weapon, and places a small handful of dry crumpled grass handy.

The fire-maker then rubs the palms of his hands, and also the tip of the drill, on the dry ground, and drops a minute quantity of earth into the chosen concavity on the fire stick. In this cavity the convex end of the drill is now placed. He then applies the flattened palms of his hands to the upper end of the drill. Proceeding quite slowly, he causes the drill to rotate by moving the flattened palms backwards and forwards against each other, at the same time steadily pressing the drill downward into the cavity of the fire stick. As the palms pass down the stick the speed of rotation is gradually increased to the maximum.

When the lower borders of the hands have arrived within 6 inches of the fire stick, the third and little finger of the left hand are thrown around the drill to retain it firmly in position, whilst the right hand is rapidly thrown upwards to enable its third and little fingers to grasp the upper end of the drill. By the right hand the drill is now retained in position, whilst

the left is released and brought upwards opposite to its fellow. The flexed fingers are now extended, and the flattened palms, again opposed to one another, make another journey down the length of the drill.

As the drill rotates, smoke appears, whilst the powdered wood of the stick fire, gradually dribbling down the gutter made in its side leading from the cavity in which the drill is rotating, forms a little mound on the sword blade. The particles forming the pile cohere, but do not smoke or glow. When the mound has attained to the amount that would be on a threepenny piece, it is found by experience that a portion of it, the size of half a pea, can be blown up into a solid red-hot ember. The man, therefore, having made his little pile, leisurely picks up a few blades of dry grass, on to which he tilts from the sword blade the little mound of coherent dust, and encloses it in the grass. He gently blows on it three or four times, whereupon the grass bursts into flame.

Thirty to forty seconds is the average time required to produce the mass ready to blow up. A flame is fairly uniformly started in three-quarters of a minute from the time of beginning to drill. This statement is based on a number of observations carefully made with a stop-watch.

Fire is also carried about from place to place by herdsmen, cultivators, and travellers, in the form of a smouldering brand.

In the settled portions of Kikúyu, fuel is often exceedingly scarce. Nothing that interferes with cultivation is allowed to stand, beyond a few isolated sacred trees. Hence, for fuel, the natives depend on the small brushwood from land lying fallow, and on the dead bushes of the bean (njú-gu), of which large crops are grown.

At a particular dance a small fire is made in the centre of the ground, on which the branches of a special tree are placed before and during the performance.<sup>1</sup> But it is the

<sup>1</sup>Cf p 180

smoke derived from the special herbage, and not the fire, that is the point of this proceeding. Again, in offering sacrifice, fire is employed; but it has no sanctity, being simply a necessity for the preparation of the cooked meat that constitutes the sacrifice.

On the other hand, a living man pursued by the "Bad People" was able to make good his escape by interposing a fire betwixt himself and the ghostly pack.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of a spirit also seems to be associated with the fire in a hut.<sup>2</sup>

When a new hut has been built, the three stones of which the fireplace is formed must be new and uncontaminated,<sup>3</sup> but no special consideration is given to the making of the first fire within their circle.

### STRING-MAKING

String (mu-gí-o), which is used for various purposes, and is to be found on sale in most of the native markets, is made from the bark of certain trees, and also from the tendons of animals (ró-ga).

The native names of the trees of which the barks are employed for making string are:—

Mu-gí-o—this plant gives its name to all vegetable string, whether such be made from the mu-gí-o tree itself, or from the bark of trees of any other kind. Mon-dú-e (Abutilon, sp.); Mu-ké-o; Mu-lín'-da n'gu-rú-e; Mu-gú-mu.

The process of manufacture is the same whatever plant is employed.

The first step is to peel (ku-nor'-a) the rods, the second to chew (ku-ta-nú-ka) the stripped bark, and the last to roll (ku-o-gó-sa) the masticated fibre into a yarn of the desired

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 241

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 242.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 131.

fineness. Two of such yarns are rolled, the one immediately after the other, and as they are formed they are again rolled in the reverse direction into a two-stranded cord. This cord is afterwards plaited, or woven, with the fingers alone, into bags which vary in size from those that would be only large enough to hold half a dozen pennies, to others big and strong enough to contain a sack of potatoes. The same form of string, in different sizes and qualities, is used for the making of snares, to repair calabashes by sewing, to string beads together, to tie up the daily load of sweet-potato tops, and to bind together the sugar-cane pulp in order to wring out its juice (ku-hí-ha n'jó-hi) when making the national fermented drink (n'jó-hi).

Custom ordains that string for some purposes shall be made by the men, and for other purposes by the women. The twine that the women weave into bags (sing. mon'-do, pl. ki-on'-do) is made by them. So, too, a mother must chew and make the morsel of cord that binds together the tiny bunch of leaves that plays so important a part in the ceremony of her son's circumcision. On the other hand, the men must make the cord they require for the manufacture of n'jó-hi and for the setting of snares. The men also make the cord which binds together the daily collected truss of sweet-potato tops, nightly taken home for the milch goats and the fattening ram that lives in perpetual darkness beneath his master's bedstead. The mending, too, of cracked calabashes is done by the men.

The tendons of which string is made are chiefly obtained from the domestic animals, the goat, the sheep, and the ox. A very small amount is derived from the wild game by occasional barter with the race of wild hunters—the N'doróbo.

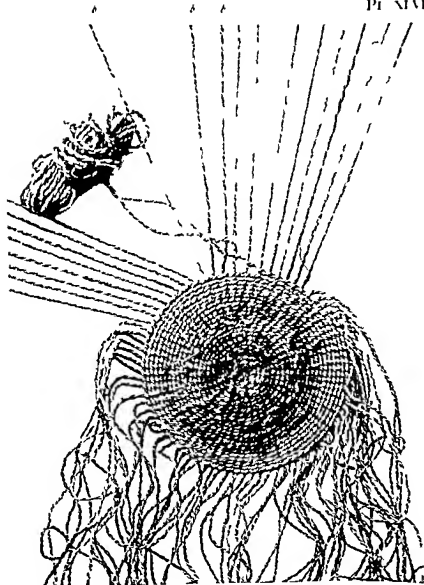
The method by which the tendons are extracted from the carcase of the animal by the Akikúyu shows some ingenuity. After the beast is skinned, they are taken up singly and placed in a cleft stick; this is then gradually worked backwards, thus separating the flesh from the ligament. They are then dried



*II S R phot*

**WEAVING A STRING BAG (Mon' do or Ki-on'-do)**

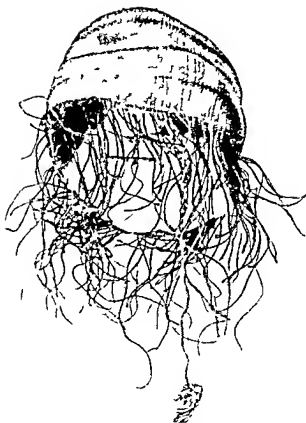
The work in hand is slung, bottom upwards, by a cord that passes around the maker's neck, in order to support its weight and to leave her hands free



71 W [R]

## THE COMMENCEMENT OF A STRING BAG

To show the "stitch" or manner in which the long double working cord (a) is woven around the short lengths (b, b, b)



*Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.)*

# A STRING BAG THREE PARTS FINISHED

Shows the position in which it hangs from the neck in process of making (The white mass is paper, introduced to assist it, when being photographed)



*Brit Mus (A)*

### THREE STRING BAGS

Each is made in the same way and of the same materials. They vary only in the degree of fineness of the twine.

When pressed flat the smallest (shown against a sheet of white paper) measures  $2 \times 2$  in. the largest  $3 \frac{1}{2} \times 3$  in. the other  $10 \times 9$  in. The large one is shown in use Pl lxxxiii p 104a



in the sun and carefully preserved, being only split up and twisted into thread as required.

A Kikúyu cord is formed of two strands, each strand consisting of a single yarn. Each yarn is made by rolling the fibre employed between the right palm and the right thigh, in a direction downwards and outwards; immediately afterwards the two yarns are twisted together by a return movement of the hand directed upwards and inwards.

String is thus made of varying degrees of fineness, say from the size of the smallest knitting needle to that of a moderately sized one. I have never seen anything heavier than the above, or of the character of rope. For this purpose wild vines are roughly twisted together, e.g. in making bridges, or snares for large animals.

The customary price for a ball of strong well-made twine, as used for bag weaving, is to-day (1908) 1 pice (1 rupee = 64 pice = 1s. 4d.). Such a ball weighs 3½ oz. (weighed) and contains 70 yards (measured).

## IRON

### WINNING THE ORE, AND THE MANUFACTURE OF IRON FROM IT

In the labyrinth of hills that form Kikúyu, the native of to-day is found smelting iron in a manner so simple that, as we watch the different steps he takes to achieve his end, we feel we are standing beside primitive man before the dawn of history.

The mind of the native is difficult to fathom and his disposition to gauge. I was allowed apparently to go everywhere and to see everything: I was treated with the greatest politeness: everything that would be likely to please me was

done, but any question or allusion on my part to the subject of the winning and extraction of iron was always met with replies calculated to lead the conversation into other channels. "Iron came from a place a great way off!" Never mind, I would travel there specially. "It was dug from a great hole." All right, I would enter it. "The hole could only be descended with a rope." Could not I climb any rope? "The rope was decayed and might break, and it would be said that my hosts had killed me." I would make a new rope specially, and leave a letter to absolve them from blame. "But the spot was in the heart of a hostile district, a really bad people to the west of us." I would take a strong escort and make friends by giving presents. I felt sure they would like me! "No, no. To take me there would provoke hostilities with their neighbours. it was politically impossible for me to go," and so on *ad infinitum*.

Yet all the time the spot was an open quarry, in the heart of their own country, situated due east, distant about five miles!

Politeness and patience, however, work wonders, and when long afterwards they did take me to the spot, the prevarications of the past formed material for many a joke.

Those branches of the Akikuyu that I have been amongst cannot imagine a time when iron was not in use. I have made careful and wide inquiry to establish this point. Their folk-tales too, though dealing with times so remote that the animals are mythical, nevertheless refer to articles made of iron.

The population may amount to perhaps 500,000. Every individual is the possessor of at least some iron. a child may have less than an ounce, whilst a man or woman may perhaps hold as much as ten or fifteen pounds in different forms, but all, for use or ornament, have a little.

The following is a fairly exhaustive list of the articles in use amongst the Akikuyu that are made of iron —



*W S R phot*

A TYPICAL VILW IN THE IRON-SAND QUARRIES

All material to the sky-line has been artificially washed away.

The figure in the foreground is a girl with her head unshaved. Cf. p. 140.

nearer the head of the glen, is led, with steady fall, in an artificial channel, over the surface of the detritus of the cliff. In this way its action can be brought to bear as desired against the material of the glacis at any level, and at any point, throughout the greater part of the length of the gorge.

Thus is excavated, and carried down into the brook below, the ferriferous sand formed from the more disintegrated portions of the rock, whilst those portions that are somewhat harder remain *in situ*, as huge boulders and isolated masses, making a chaotic scene and rendering progress difficult. The bounding cliffs of the ravine being thus gradually deprived of the support of their natural buttress, are constantly breaking away. After this manner have apparently millions of tons of material been removed by the directing hand of man, associated with the action of the torrential rains.

The winning of the ore is done by the women and children of a few families living near by, as an occasional employment: the cultivation of the soil is still their primary occupation which they have not renounced, to any considerable extent, for the greater gain that would arise from collecting the iron sand.

Selecting a spot by the side of the stream where the ground is hard, or some place in the course of the flume, the native smooths out a shallow pan. Its shape is somewhat that of a scallop shell. Its dimensions are 3 feet by 2 feet. At the point where the shell would be hinged to its fellow, and for 2 feet on either side, he builds a wall a few inches high of sticks and grass, leaving an opening about 9 inches wide in the middle. This opening he then temporarily closes with a separate wisp of grass.

Making a pile of about ten quarts of the iron-bearing sand, at the end of the pan farthest from him, and standing with one foot just outside his little grass gate and the other in the stream, he takes a half gourd in his hand and begins work. Holding the gourd by its neck, he scoops up the water and



*W S R phot*

CHILDREN WASHING IRON SAND

The washing pans described on p 8 , here extend in series along the left hand bank



*W S R phot*

DRYING THE WASHED IRON SAND

A pile of washed ore is shown in the foreground spread on the top of a smooth rock

dashes it against the face of the pile with a rapidity and accuracy that is obviously the outcome of practice. The water flows away in a steady stream, turbid with the lighter materials in suspension. Larger pieces he lightly flicks out of the pan with the finger-tips as he pauses from time to time. So he continues until most of the pile has disappeared. The sand now covers the floor of the pan, and has assumed a much darker colour than formerly, owing to the larger proportion of iron ore mixed with it. Again it is piled up at the same spot in the pan, and again the same process is repeated. From time to time he lifts the wisp of grass that closes the opening in the little fence, and scrapes up with his hands the rich deposit accumulated in front and beneath it, as also that which by now covers the floor of the pan.

This process of alternately piling and washing is repeated some half-dozen times. When the iron grains spread over the floor of the pan fairly mask, by their black colour, any sand mixed with them, he scrapes up and puts into his half gourd what he has gained, and moving knee-deep into the stream proceeds to give the final washing.

Time after time he stirs with his hand the contents of his gourd, adds more water and pours it off when turbid. At last the water comes away perfectly clear and he can do no more. The result is a wet mass of black sand, which is, to describe it accurately, a magnetite ore.<sup>1</sup> It consists of a mixture of quartz grains and magnetite, the latter often in well-formed octahedral crystals: a small quantity of ilmenite is present. This wet sand is at once spread out on a flat rock to dry, and is then poured into a gourd bottle ready to be carried home. To gain a pint of well-cleaned ore would take a native a good hour.

The iron smelters are blacksmiths, some half-dozen in number, who live in the neighbourhood of the quarry. The

<sup>1</sup> Kik. Mu than ga.

collection of the ore is done by their women and children. To day only enough is collected for their working needs, in addition to perhaps an equal amount sold as raw iron. In the past the production must have been much greater, judging from the extent of the old workings, but a knowledge of the political conditions that existed in Kikúyu prior to the advent of the white man, leads me to think that only those Akikuyu resident in the immediate neighbourhood of the deposit ever worked it. It is inconceivable that it was ever treated as other than the private, though common property, of the natives in the immediate vicinity. There may, however, have been a much greater local population than now working energetically at it. moreover, the splendid virgin forest existed close at hand until within the last three generations to day it is 20 miles distant. Two out of the thirteen clans into which the Akikuyu are divided<sup>1</sup> do not work in iron. No member of these two clans can become a smith. There is nothing of the nature of a trade guild amongst the ironworkers, nor is the smelting of iron associated with any ceremonial rites. The curse of a smith is, however, considered to be particularly biting and adhesive, and is expensive for him who has fallen beneath its ban to "spit out"<sup>2</sup>.

The furnace or "hearth" consists of a hole in the ground lined with tempered clay, similar to that of which pots and bellows' nozzles are made. Its shape is that which a round bowl assumes when lateral compression has reduced its diameter by one half. the edge becomes depressed at the extremities of the long axis forming, as it were, two spouts, whilst the sides rise up considerably above their level. The fireclay lining is brought well over the edge, forming a wide, convex, everted border all around. The interior of the furnace has

<sup>1</sup> The clan known as the Nye thá ga or Ái kú ú ru and the clan known as the Á ga-chú ku these last also do not circumcise.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ceremonial incantations p. 209 No. 21.





H. S. R. pl.

## FURNACE OR HEARTH FOR SMELTING IRON ORE

Viewed from above (Object on right hand  
edge is a half calabash)

## Measurements —

Interior Anterior depression to posterior  
depression, 8 in right side to left side  
23 inExterior Anterior depression to posterior  
depression 47 in

Apparent substance of wall 10 in



*W S R phot*

### THE INTERIOR OF A SMITHY

Shows a pair of bellows and their wooden nozzles and the earthen ware blast pipe into which the wooden nozzles pass

An anvil against which rest two tools for wire drawing (to left hand vice to right draw plate)

A blacksmith's hammer (side view)

A stone anvil the upper surface of which shows two distinct grooves. Against the anvil rests another hammer handle uppermost

the form of a blunt truncated cone, laterally flattened. The substance of the clay forming the lip, where alone I could observe it, was, I think, about 2 in thick. Over the whole was thrown a well-built permanent roof—a circular hut without sides—about 15 ft in diameter.

The bellows consist of a cone, or fool's-cap, of sewn goat skins, about 4 ft long, and 6 in in diameter at the large end. Into the apex is whipped a carved wooden pipe 6 in in length. This pipe, when the bellows are in use, is securely pegged down to the ground, and over its extremity is loosely fitted the expanded butt of another pipe, made of pottery. This earthenware nozzle is about 3 ft long, and of the size throughout of a man's wrist. It rests on the lip of the hearth, with its nose directed somewhat downwards. Its distal half is buried beneath the mass of black charcoal that occupies the top of the hearth, but of it the nose alone is in a position of great heat, as is shown by that part alone becoming fused. The circumference of the brim of the leather fool's cap, that constitutes the body of the bellows, is roughly divided into three parts. To two of these, on its outside, a straight flat strip of wood is sewn. An adjustable thong is stretched between the two extremities of each stick to form a becket.

Slipping all the fingers of one hand into one loop, and the thumb of the same hand into the other, the lad who works the bellows brings together the butts of the two straight sticks, and rests them upright on the ground. Retaining them there by pressure, he next proceeds to separate his thumb from the fingers and palm, which results in the upper extremity of the sticks becoming separated, in other words, the circular opening of the bag is constrained to assume the form of a V, and through this V shaped opening the air enters the bellows. Still keeping the sticks vertical, he now brings them together by closing his hand. That done, he depresses them on to the upper surface of the bag in the line of its long axis with a steady

squeeze. A blast is thus ejected through the earthen nozzle equal to the capacity of that part of the leather cone, compressed by the two sticks. The continuity of the blast is maintained by the resiliency of the uncompressed portion. Two such bellows are always used simultaneously by the native, one being placed on either hand of the blower, who sits on his heels between them, and works them alternately. The ground is made up so that the bellows, as they rest on it, shall slope gently downwards into the fire. The same form of bellows is used by all Kikúyu smiths. Other instruments incidentally employed are the usual blacksmith's anvil, hammer, and tongs. The only materials made use of are the clean-washed iron sand and charcoal; nothing else whatsoever. The charcoal is made from the wood of a particular tree (*mu-koi-i-go*).<sup>1</sup>

I have not seen a furnace actually being started: they commence operations at dawn. When I arrived the furnace was full to the top and the bellows working, but, as the mass gradually fell in the centre more ore was sifted over it by the handful, and more charcoal added little by little. The top surface of the mass in the hearth always remained black, and kept tending to become concave in consequence of the combustion of the central core. The blast is maintained till sundown. The mass is then left in the hearth for the night to cool.

Next morning I was summoned to see the next step. All loose charcoal was, as far as possible, scraped away from the top and sides of the mass in the hearth, thereby giving it a semi-globular form. A little water was sprinkled on it: a rope of green banana leaf mudribs slipped beneath its greatest diameter, and it was capsized on to the depressed lip of the hearth and so rolled clear. Its appearance was then that of a coherent mass of hot charcoal. More water was now sprinkled

<sup>1</sup> *Mu koi i go*—*Bridelia micrantha*, Jfull Arg



*W S R phot*

#### THE INTERIOR OF A SMITHY

The smith is looking along the sword that he is making to see that it is true. The large anvil is that shown in the preceding figure. In order to take the photograph the thatch of the smithy had previously been stripped off, with the consent of the owner, on the understanding that he should have a new roof for the old one.

on it, and the smith and his crew, with round water-worn boulders in their hands, proceeded to knock it to pieces.

The slag was found distributed throughout the mass as it has flowed, whilst the pure iron had similarly run together into small lumps.

Carefully picking out the pieces of pure iron, the smiths then carried them to the adjoining forge, and heated and beat them into the little "blooms" of Kikúyu commerce. These weigh about 2 lbs. each. Ten quarts of sand, which is about the usual charge, might produce half a dozen such "blooms," whose value in the market would be, to-day, a small goat.

On examination, the iron thus obtained proves to be a very pure form of steel, that can be drawn into wire or fashioned into cutting instruments. These, though untempered, maintain a keen edge. It is welded without difficulty simply by heating and hammering.<sup>1</sup>

## THE BLACKSMITH

A good blacksmith makes all the articles that are formed of iron. He is by far the most skilful workman, in fact he may be said to be the only highly skilled craftsman to be found amongst the Akikúyu.

When a man wants a metal article he does not simply order it of the smith and pay for it or arrange for payment. Such is never done. There is a certain customary routine that is not departed from. Let it be supposed that a spear is required. The first step a man takes is to call early some morning on the smith, and give him a small present of about a quart of n'jó-hi. The subject of making a spear is then fully discussed, particularly the number of little "blooms" or blocks of iron and loads of charcoal that will have to be provided

<sup>1</sup> A most valuable note dealing with the foregoing matter, by Professor Cowland, F.R.S., A.R.S.M., will be found in Appendix IV.

They are blocks of granite fashioned by people who are said to live near the Sagana River, and specialise in making them. These stone anvils are oblong in shape with wrought surfaces, perhaps 11 in. by 7 in. by 8 in. above ground, and weigh about 50 lb. each. The value of a pair is one big goat. The lower face of the stone is set into the ground for a few inches. The upper is smooth and convex in all directions: it has its corners well bevelled off, and across it is incised a single V-shaped groove. By means of the groove the two lateral stiffening combs of weapons are raised. A particular curvature of face and depth of groove is required for different work; a spear is not made on the same anvil that a sword is made on. It is difficult, however, on inspection to appreciate much difference between the grooves and curvatures of two such anvils; but then none save a skilled spearsman can appreciate that special something in the finished article—call it “balance,” or what you please—that renders one spear infinitely more acceptable to him than another apparently identical. It may be thought that these stones would fracture under the constant concussion, which occasionally becomes severe when heavy work is being done. But they do not appear to break. I have never seen a broken stone lying about a smithy; on the contrary, they pass from father to son. A smith well known to the writer, told him that of his four anvils, he had inherited one pair and bought the other. In this case one of his four anvils had no grooves across it.

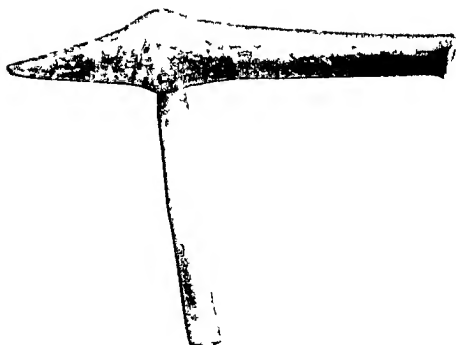
*The Hammer* (ke-li'-ha) is a tool of great interest. It seems to be unique amongst hammers, and its use has never previously been noted. By it excellently finished work is turned out. A smith has usually three of them. The following exact description is taken from one of medium size. Briefly, the tool is essentially a long heavy bar of iron, into the side of which is firmly fixed a wooden peg, whereby it may be held. The blow given is that caused by the fall of the

bar from the vertical to the horizontal position in consequence of the grip of the hand on the peg being released.

The hammer-head is a round bar of soft steel weighing  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lb. It is 10 in. long and 6 in. in circumference at the point of its greatest girth. This point of greatest girth is situated, as a sharp ridge, 6 in. from one end and 4 in. from the other. At the point of greatest girth the bar of metal is pierced by a hole  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. in diameter, to receive the handle. This handle hole is pierced to the left side of the line of longitudinal mesial section. From the point of greatest girth the short arm rapidly tapers to a sharp point, whilst the long arm is only reduced in calibre until its circumference becomes 3 in., when it terminates in a slightly convex face. This face looks downwards when the tool is held in the right hand, and the long axis of the head makes an angle of  $45^\circ$  with the plane of the horizon. The handle is a round stick driven into the hole in the hammer-head, and is not wedged. It projects from the hammer-head 6 in., and is of equal calibre ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  in.) throughout.

When the smith picks up his hammer for use he holds it in such a way that the handle and the head both lie in the same horizontal plane. The convex bevelled face that terminates the long arm rests on the work; all the rest of the hammer-head lies to the right-hand side of it. The smith then raises his hand by a few inches to a higher level than the work, but still maintains the handle parallel to and to the right-hand side of it. He tightens his grasp of the slight round handle, and simultaneously rotates his wrist outwards. The hammer-head thereby passes from a horizontal to a nearly vertical position. He then relaxes his grip, whereupon the slight handle rotates in his grasp, as the long arm of the hammer-head falls from the vertical to strike, with its bevelled extremity, the appointed spot. At the same time, from the wrist, or from the elbow, according to the force of blow





*Brit Mus (K)*

### THE HAMMER OF KIKUYU

The head of the hammer is here specially placed with its face directed towards the reader's right hand, in order to show its slightly convex striking surface. In use, however, the tool is held so that its pointed end is towards the right hand of the smith except when the spike is being employed (with this spike a direct blow is given in the same manner as we use a hammer). Made from native iron by Kikuyu smith in author's presence, Gura River, 1908



H. S. A. 1

## A BLACKSMITH'S "MEDICINE"

Here five earthenware nozzles of a blacksmith's bellows and one cooking pot with bottom knocked out, are shown.

Each of the nozzles is of the short variety used by the smith; those of the iron smelter are four times as long, though identical in pattern.

Into the bulbous extremity of these pottery nozzles the wooden ones attached permanently to the leather bellows, are laid when in use.

required, a flicking movement is conveyed to the tool, similar to that employed to crack a hunting-whip.

The smith never stands to his work: he sits on the back of his heels, with the whole of the soles of his feet flat on the ground. Very rarely indeed, and only in doing the heaviest work, is the hammer ever swung from the shoulder, and then, as no hammer handle is more than 6 in. long, it can only be grasped with one hand.

The smith's *Tongs* (mi-há-to) are 15 in. over all and weigh 23½ oz.

The two parts are united by a well-burred pin.

The jaws, from hinge to snout, are 4 in. long.

The proximal portion of each jaw is bowed, so as to half embrace the work, whilst its nose, ¾ in. in width, is flattened for ¾ in. to bring it in contact with its neighbour. Between and by these two flat surfaces the work is grasped.

The extremity of each handle is pointed, and is used for making and enlarging holes.

This tool so much resembles a European article that particular inquiries were made regarding it. The people, however, say that the tongs of the blacksmith have always been identical in pattern with those to-day in use.

The *Bellows* (mú-ra) have been fully described and figured on p. 85. They are identical in pattern with those used for smelting iron ore, but are somewhat smaller, whilst their earthenware nozzles are lighter, and only about a quarter the length of those employed for use in smelting.

It is not unusual for a smith to put up an old bellows' nozzle to protect his property and crops, and such is "strong medicine." The accompanying illustration shows five thus employed: so large a number is quite exceptional, the broken pot too, near by, suggests that it is a case of death. Circumstances prevented the facts being gathered.

In working, nothing of the nature of a flux is used, nor are

any steps taken to clean the surfaces to be brought together when welding. Nevertheless, a thoroughly good union is made, and a broken article from defective workmanship is not often seen. The Kikuyu spear is a good instance of the skill of the Kikuyu smith. It is a highly finished weapon of complicated make, yet it has a beautiful balance. It poises so delightfully that merely to handle a good spear makes one feel bloodthirsty. Yet such a spear is simply tapped out under the hammer, then pegged down on a banana log, burrished by means of a succession of balls of a soft granite the size of a goose's egg, and finally given a keen cutting edge by rubbing on a suitable stone.

A list of most of the articles made by the smith are given on p. 81.

## WIRE DRAWING

The smith first cleans his stone anvil for work by scraping its face with a sword (*rohuyu*), and afterwards with the wooden handle of a hammer (*ke li ha*).

The bellows' boy (*m'goi o*) starts his blast. A bit of iron, weighing some two pounds or so, is picked up with the tongs (*mi ha to*) placed on the glowing coals and then more of them are heaped over it. When bright hot it is taken out of the fire with the tongs, and by them held on the anvil whilst it is hammered out into a four sided bar. As it lengthens out under repeated heatings and hammerings, one end is presently made pointed and driven into a wooden handle which enables the bar to be grasped without the aid of the tongs. The bar is thus worked out into a long rod of square section, each face of which is about  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. When a few inches have been brought to the desired size in the square, their edges are beaten down, giving a rounded section to that portion of

the rod. As occasion requires, further material is added by welding. A fairly even rod of iron is thus produced.

It may be noted that, after each hammering, the rod in its wooden handle is held vertically, and the butt of the handle given a smart bump on the anvil. This has the effect of again driving the rod, perhaps loosened by the hammering, tightly into its handle.

The next step is to reduce this rod-iron, wrought under the hammer, to a wire of even gauge. Taking a rough coil of it, the craftsman proceeds to size it according to the purpose it is required for. To do this he first makes a sharp point to one end of the wire by rubbing down that end between a maize cob and the surface of his stone anvil. The point thus formed he passes through the particular hole in the draw-plate or sizing-iron (*ú-ta*) of the gauge required.

This *ú-ta* (lit. "a bow") is a somewhat flattened spindle-shaped bar of iron, 5 in.  $\times$  1 in.  $\times$   $\frac{1}{2}$  in. On one of its two faces are seven depressed conical cups, each  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. in diameter across the base. The apex of each of these cones appears on the opposite face as a small hole. Before use the chosen hole is almost obliterated by the face being tapped with the butt of a cold chisel. It is then again opened out exactly the size required, by introducing into it the tapered point of an iron needle some 6 in. long (*mu-kú-ha*). From being thus constantly tapped, one face of the *ú-ta*—the flattened one—presents a series of slight depressions, each the size of a farthing, in the centre of each of which is the hole that determines the gauge of the wire.

The end of the wire to be drawn, pointed as described, is now passed, first into the base of one of the conical cavities in the *ú-ta*, and then outwards, through the hole of defined size that forms the apex of the cavity. The smith in Fig. 1x. p. 95, is specially demonstrating this point.

The now projecting end of wire is then seized by means of a *clamp* or *hand vice* (ru ga)

This tool is very cleverly designed, so much so that I have made special inquiries respecting its origin. I failed, however, to gather anything showing that the design has been introduced from without. It consists of —

(a) A *bar* of iron (ro ga) split for two tenths its length. Weight, 2 lbs 4½ oz. Length, 10 in. Like a tuning fork.

(b) A cold *chisel* or *wedge* (ke ra si), 7½ in long, ¾ in wide, ¼ in thick. Weight, 6 oz.

(c) A ring or *collar* (n'go me), 2¾ in in diameter, 1 in deep, and ¾ in thick. Weight 10½ oz.

The clamp (ru ga) is used in this way —

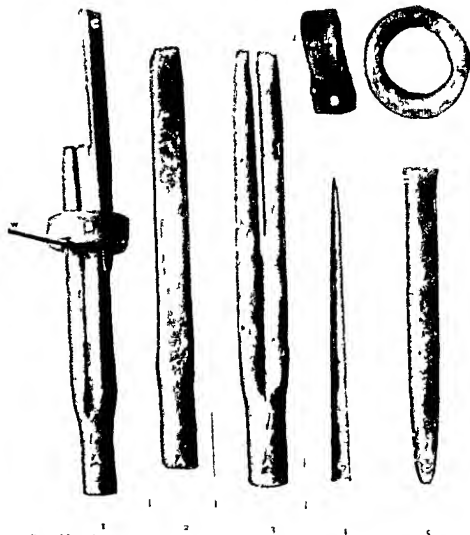
First the broad flat point of the wedge (ke rá si) is inserted into the cleft of the split iron bar (ro ga). Its jaws are then further separated by tapping the other end of the wedge with a wooden mallet (ju gu ma) until they have become sufficiently apart to permit the end of the wire, on which is now threaded the *u ta*, or draw plate to be passed betwixt them, and to project an inch or so beyond.

The wedge (ke ra si) is now knocked away, whereupon the jaws of the split bar (ro ga) close upon the inserted wire and pinch it.

The iron collar (n go me) is then passed over the top of the split rod (ro ga), and is maintained in a position about half way down its length by the left hand, whilst with the right the wedge (ke rá-si) is inserted and adjusted inside the collar.

By hammering this wedge (ke ra si) firmly home the two jaws of which the split bar (ro ga) consists are thereby brought together so closely that the wire inserted betwixt them is held immovably.

The draw plate or sizing iron (*u ta*) as threaded on the wire is now either placed with its two extremities resting in notches cut at the same level in a couple of posts firmly



Br t Mu [A]

### THE WIRE DRAWER'S CLAMP

- 1 The rod, or clamp (A B C, put together and shown firmly holding a piece of wire (W))
- 2 The rod, or split bar (A) side view
- 3 The rod, or split bar (A) front view
- 4 The ke r -si, or wedge (C) side view
- 5 The ke r -si, or wedge (C) front view
- 6 The n go -me, or collar (B) side view
- 7 The n go -me, or collar (B) as seen from above

*W S R phot*

## WIRE-DRAWING

The smith explains the action of the draw-plate (u-ta) by resting it against his toes (it is usually rested against two strong notched posts). For demonstration he has passed a short length of wire (shown) through the u-ta (shown), and is holding the wire by means of the clamp, which is just indicated in the shadow behind his hands.



embedded a few inches apart, and projecting about 2 ft above ground, or else, in the case of light work, it is placed against the feet, and held in position by the toes

The vice (ru-ga) is then seized with both hands and the wire drawn forcibly through the ú ta. I have seen copper and fine iron wire being drawn in this way, but I have not seen the rough rod being drawn through the ú ta for the first time. The workmen told me, however, that they draw it cold, and the character of the metal supports this. The draw-plate (u ta) is not tempered in any way.

One of the commonest gifts of a father to his daughter on her marriage is a collar made from iron wire. If a man is well off he to day makes a point that this shall be of wire made by hand by the native smith, and not of trade wire.

## CHAIN MAKING

Chain made from fine iron wire is universally and largely used through Kikuyu. It is employed solely as an article of ornament. To this purpose it lends itself admirably. In pattern and in method of manufacture there is no variation, in size it is not made with links larger than  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch in length. No form of chain, other than that to be described, is made or employed for any purpose by the Akikuyu.

A hank of wire having been finally sized by being passed through the draw plate is usually placed over one of the jaws of a forked stick stuck upright in the ground. The native sits down close to it. He then takes a metal rod some 24 in in length, and of the thickness of a knitting needle that has one of its ends firmly set into the long axis of a wooden handle about 9 in long like a round desk paper ruler. He then laps one end of the suspended hank round the lower part of the metal rod and then squeezes, between his right forefinger

and thumb, the wire against the rod. At the same time he causes the rod to rotate by rolling the wooden cylinder, into which it is fixed, betwixt the inside of his flattened left hand and the outside of his left thigh. The flexible wire rapidly travels up the rod, which thus becomes covered by an evenly applied whipping of wire as a long spiral around it.

The wooden handle is now removed, the rod with its whipping laid on a flat-topped stone, and a longitudinal cut made completely through the whipping throughout its entire length by means of a short wide chisel or punch struck with a wooden mallet. The wire whipping can now be slipped down the central core when it falls apart as a series of links or circlets of fine wire (ga zi ka).

Having lately formed part of a spiral, the two free extremities of each link do not at present face one another, for they lie in different planes. A pinch of loose links is therefore taken and laid on a suitable stone, and one by one, as pushed forward by a finger, each receives a blow from the butt of a chisel held vertically above it. Each link thereby becomes truly flat.

The two ends of each link have now been brought opposite to one another, but they are still separated by an interval equivalent to the thickness of the chisel edge with which they were cut. This gap enables each link to be hooked on to the one preceding it, thereby forming a chain.

As the chain is formed, bit by bit, by hooking the links together, it is carefully wound under slight strain round the middle two-fourths of a stick, some 16 in. long and of the thickness of a child's wrist, in order to preserve it from falling apart, and the end is temporarily secured.

This stick or roller with its coating of unriveted chain is now laid on the ground close to a stone with a rounded top. Its ends are opposed by a couple of pegs driven into the earth. A short length of the yet unclosed chain is now drawn off the roller and stretched across the top of the anvil by the



*W S A phot*

# THE FIRST STEP IN THE MAKING OF CHAIN

Winding the sized wire on to the iron rod      The diameter of this rod decides the size of each link



*W S R photo*

# THE SECOND STEP IN THE MAKING OF CHAIN

The iron rod, now covered by its wire whipping and with handle removed, is next laid on a stone and a cut carried along its entire length, by means of a short chisel and light wooden mallet



*W S K phot*

### THE THIRD STEP IN THE MAKING OF CHAIN

The little pile of circlets of iron wire resulting from Step II are now pushed forward, one by one, with the finger and flattened with a single smart tap of the butt of the chisel

## PLATE LVII

### THE FOURTH STEP IN THE MAKING OF CHAIN

Fig 1 shows the result of Step II, prior to their being flattened by Step III, being a sample of links, as cut, laid on a table

Fig 2 Sample links suspended by a thread

Fig 3 The links flattened by Step III, are next hooked together, and the chain thus formed is strained around a wooden roller, and the end secured so as to maintain the tension

Fig 4 Iron chain to show evenness

Fig 5 Copper chain to show relative degree of fineness

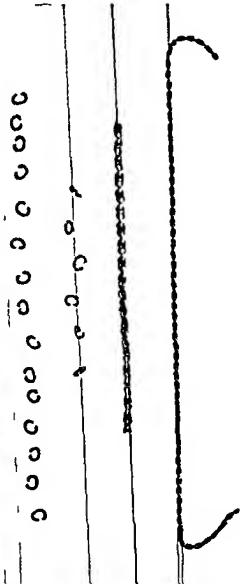
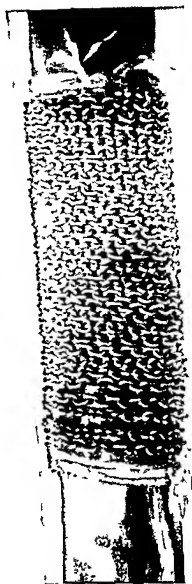


PLATE LXX

*THE FIFTH STEP IN THE MAKING OF CHAIN*

The roller, with its coating of links (Pl lxix Fig 3), is here shown in use. It is retained in position by a couple of pegs whilst the chain is gradually drawn off it.



PL. LXV



*W S R phot*



*W. S. R. phot.*

# THE SIXTH AND FINAL STEP IN THE MAKING OF CHAIN

As drawn from the roller the chain is led across a flat stone, where, by a tap with the side of the cutting end of the chisel, the link is closed.

Also shows ear-rings, previously illustrated in Pl. xiii. Fig. 6, in wear

smith, who is seated on the ground facing both anvil and roller. With one hand he grasps the finished portion of the chain, if any such there be, or, in the case of a new length of chain, a terminal piece of string with the middle, third, and fourth fingers, thereby maintaining a steady strain against the roller, whilst with the index finger and thumb of the same hand he so manipulates the link he is dealing with as to bring its opening uppermost. This done, he proceeds to bestow a sharp tap immediately over the opening with the side of the cutting end of his chisel held in the other hand.

By this single blow the once rounded link becomes oblong, its two free ends are brought into opposition, and a beautifully smooth even chain is produced, which does not develop defects on long use. By rubbing with sand it is burnished and rendered evenly flexible, whilst friction with its wearer's greasy skin gradually imparts to it a brilliant polish.

Occasionally trade copper wire, the size of bell wire, is similarly drawn smaller, and made in the same way into chain of extraordinary fineness, evenness, and smoothness, each inch of chain consisting of fourteen links. Such fine copper chain is, however, uncommon. The steel chain of everyday use has usually seven to ten links to the inch. A piece of copper chain I obtained from its maker, whose portrait is given, is 69 inches long and weighs exactly 1 ounce. A piece of steel chain of his make measures 89 inches and weighs exactly  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ounces.

## POTTERY

A porous pottery is made very similar in form, character, and ornamentation to the prehistoric pottery of Britain. The material employed is a mixture of a blue clay and a soft sand.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This sand is called li-um'-ba; it is disintegrated granite rock in which quartz grains, felspar, and mica flakes make up probably the whole bulk.

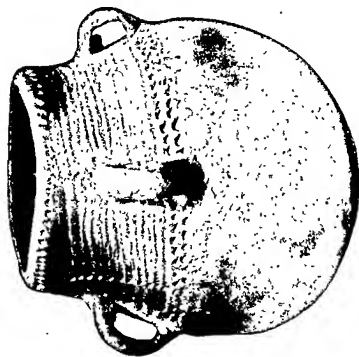
These essentials are found in two deposits 10 miles apart. The pottery is made in the neighbourhood of the sand, which is mined in a hillside on the bank of the Gú-ra River in Wombú-gu's country. Where sand is found, there pottery is made; but deposits of sand are few and far between in Kikúyu. No sharp sand is found in its rivers and brooks, for the face of the country is everywhere covered with a rich red volcanic soil of great depth, resting on igneous rocks. Hence a stream consists of a channel in the basalt, partially blocked with large boulders, and choked with alluvial mud.

The making of pottery is exclusively the work of the women of a few families living in the neighbourhood of the sand deposit. They fetch the materials to their homes; there they make, dry, and burn the pots, and finally they carry them long distances to the native markets for sale.

It is difficult to understand how their output can be sufficient to meet the demand, for every death means the destruction of all the deceased's pots, besides the loss due to the accidents of daily use amongst a large population.

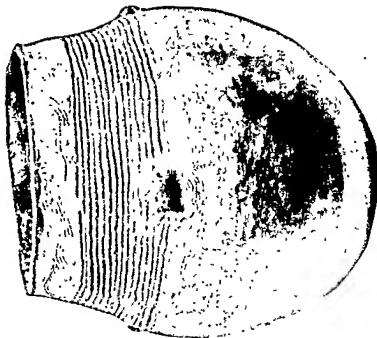
The clay (m'bí-u) for pottery is carried by the women, from the marsh in which it is found, in wicker panniers, and is spread out in the sun to dry, in the form of small rough pieces like pulled bread. The natives say that they do this because the water which is in the clay when collected is "bad": beyond this they can give no explanation for exposing it to the sun and air. When thoroughly dry it is placed in an elliptical hole in the ground 24 in. by 19 in. by 10 in. lined with banana leaves; it is then moistened into a plastic mass, and is at once ready for use. It is now known as n'dáka.

From the mine the sand is brought in bags woven with the fingers from twisted twine. The acquisition of the sand is not devoid of risk. The natives tunnel into the hillside for it. As they do nothing to support the sides and roof of the drive, the miner is sooner or later overwhelmed. This



*Brit. Mus. (R.)*

POT MADE BY KIKUYU WOMEN  
British East Africa, 1908



*Brit. Mus.*

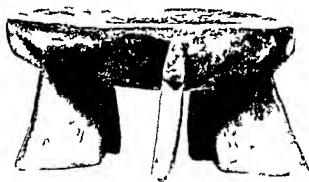
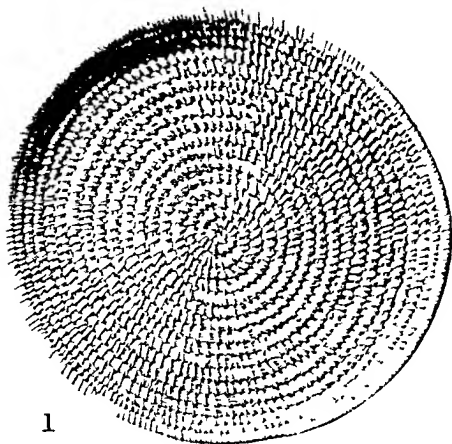
CINERARY URN, FROM BARROW, ROSE DOWNS,  
DORSET  
Earliest Bronze Period

PLATE LXVIII

A TRAY AND STOOL

1 Ki-ta-ru'-ru, or tray particularly used for winnowing grain, as also sand in pottery-making. It is made from the plant mu-gi'-o. Diameter, 25 in; depth, 2 in. It is made in the form of a rope of graduated size flenished down. The turns are then sewn together with strips of the same material. The result is a strong, flat, almost light-tight platter, with an even, upraised border.

2 The universal form of stool found in every Kikúyu home. It is carved out of the solid.





H S R phot

## POTTERY—WOMAN WINNOWING THE SAND

The coarser particles have been gradually worked downwards to a certain point of the circumference of the tray over which they are now in the act of being jerked. The white patch in the foreground consists entirely of such rejected material.

Pl LXXIII shows the tray in detail.



event is attributed by his friends, not to natural causes, but to the influence of a spirit living in the bowels of the earth. in the direction in which the tunnel is being driven, who is annoyed at his privacy being intruded upon. When, therefore, he thus gives expression to his disapproval, they sacrifice a goat on the spot to appease him, and immediately start another tunnel, diverging from the old one at the point of fall. This they continue till the like event again happens, when again they make sacrifice and again proceed. And so on *ad infinitum*. Of course, any attempt at rescue is never even contemplated, for no M'kikúyu will approach a dying man, least of all, one absolutely in the very clutches of the fiend.

The pottery is made in the shade of the banana plantation which usually surrounds the homestead in that part of the country, and comes right up to the ru-gí-li, or strong growing *Pl.* stockade, by which the collection of huts that go to make up a Kikúyu homestead is encircled.

First, a small quantity of sand is placed on a large tray (*ki-ta-rú-ru*) which is held in the two hands. The tray is then *Pl.* gently jerked upwards, the movement being imparted by the wrists, and this is done in such a way that, when the contents *Pl.* are tossed (*nen-gu-hú-ha*) into the air, the fine sand falls back on to the tray, whilst the coarser particles (*mu-san'-ga*) are projected over its edge. The finished product (*li-um'-ba*) is a perfectly smooth, even, fine sand, which is stored for future use in a half calabash.

The dried clay too, in its turn, is carefully moistened, and worked up with the fingers to form plastic masses which are similarly stored. All being now ready, and the baby comfortably adjusted for sleep in the small of the mother's back, on one of the trays used for refining the sand a couple of double handfuls of it are thrown: on this sand a lump of moist clay of about equal amount is placed. The sand is then thoroughly

mouth downwards. The rough mass of clay forming the base now forms the upper border of the work. This border she now moistens, and works, and proceeds to mould as before, from time to time adding additional rolls of clay. All the time she keeps constricting her work; first the opening will no longer admit the whole hand, then one by one the fingers are driven out, till finally a ragged edge of clay laps upwards around a single finger. The finger is withdrawn: the burr is smoothed down: the pot is completed.

The vessel is now left to harden for a few hours as it stands protected by a leaf or two, but the potters do not seem to fear the sun's rays or too rapid drying. It is then carried into the living hut and placed on the plank platform over the hearth usually devoted to spare firewood. A smouldering fire is maintained on the hearth, which is only about five feet from the pottery. Here it remains till sufficient are ready for firing.

When a batch of about forty pots are ready, they are taken out and stood side by side on the ground, closely together and mouth downwards. Between them small sticks, ends downwards, are packed. A quantity of light brushwood is then placed on the top of the pots, and the whole set fire to. They are then packed in light panniers to take to market. It is customary for the purchaser to again burn them within and without with an armful of dry grass before taking into use.

The only articles made of pottery by the Akikúyu are the wide-mouthed pot, the narrow-mouthed pot, and the nozzles for the smith's bellows. These last are of two sizes but are identical in pattern; those for iron smelting are about 3 feet long; whilst those for use in ordinary smith's work are not more than 15 in. No article made of fired pottery, other than those mentioned, has ever been observed by the writer; <sup>nd</sup> models in unburnt clay are referred to elsewhere.



W. S. R. phot

## POTTERY—FIRST STAGE : MAKING THE UPPER HALF

(a) Figure to right shows around the base a crenated appearance, due to the original roll of clay having been forced downwards by the knuckles: the finger-tips of the right hand coarsely scraping the clay upwards, in order to reduce the substance of the wall: the left hand supporting the wall from the inside.

(b) Figure to left shows the next step. The previous work is gone over again with a piece of gourd shell (shown). Between this and the left hand inside the correct substance is obtained, the desired shape is given, and the work left with a fine finished surface.

(c) Figure in centre shows the upper half of a pot completely finished. A few leaves are thrown around the base to keep that part moist whilst the rest hardens somewhat.

incorporated with the clay by kneading with the ball of the thumbs and with the knuckles of the fingers. A mass of dough is thus made weighing about 6 lbs. This is finally shaped into a rough bar (mun'-du-a) about 9 in. long by 9 in. in circumference.

There are two distinct stages in the manufacture of every Fig. c. pot. The first step is to make and to perfectly finish off the upper half. The second is to build upon that upper half, when

the substance of the mud wall, whilst at the same time she increases its height, by gradually scraping *upwards* the material of its exterior surface. This is done with the border of the right hand, the movement of that hand being always from below upwards. All the while she keeps moving around the pot.

The part of the vessel she is forming is the upper half, being the mouth, neck, shoulder, and the upper portion of the belly. Proceeding thus, and always working her material upwards, she gradually models the wall so that it tends inwards, forming the shoulder, which in its turn merges into the neck, and finally, by increased pressure of the inside or left hand, the broad upper border of the mouth of the jar is everted. From time to time, should the size of the pot require it, additional material is added to the upper ragged border of the wall, in the form of a roll of material shaped and sized like a heavy accountant's ruler. This is thoroughly blended with the upper border of the wall by kneading between the fingers before being further dealt with. The upper half of a jar is thus completed in the rough. It is then gone over again, but instead of the border of the little finger of the right hand, a piece of the neck of a gourd is similarly applied, being dipped into water from time to time. A perfectly smooth exterior surface is thus attained, whilst the pot, as a whole, is almost as symmetrical as if turned on a lathe.

With the sharp edge of the piece of gourd she cuts half a dozen horizontal grooves about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. apart around the neck. Two or more rounded lugs are attached to the side of the neck by mere pressure. The half pot is now finished. A few leaves are now placed around the base to prevent that part from drying, and it is left for three hours to harden sufficiently to handle.

The potter then picks up the vessel from the leaves on which it is standing mouth upwards, and replaces it on them

incorporated with the clay by kneading with the ball of the thumbs and with the knuckles of the fingers. A mass of dough is thus made weighing about 6 lbs. This is finally shaped into a rough bar (*mun'-du-a*) about 9 in. long by 9 in. in circumference.

There are two distinct stages in the manufacture of every *Fig. c. pot.* The first step is to make and to perfectly finish off the upper half. The second is to build upon that upper half, when completed, the dome of clay which forms the lower portion of the finished vessel.

A dozen or so of these bars of moist tempered clay being ready, the woman first sprinkles a little dry sand on the tray and proceeds to give a final kneading to one or more of them. She then rolls this material into a cylinder of the desired length and circumference, and finally squeezes and pats it with the palms of the hands into an oblong slab of say 10 in. by 4 in., and perhaps 2 in. thick. Spreading two or three leaves on the ground, she places the slab of clay on its edge on them, at the same time bringing its two ends together. These she carefully unites by working betwixt the fingers. Should it be that it is a large pot that she is making, the ring is formed of several slabs with their ends worked together.

A thick collar of clay is now standing on its edge on the leaf. This collar is to form half a pot, and that half the upper or mouth half. She now with her thumbs forces *downwards* successively from every part of the outer surface of the collar about a quarter inch of clay, to form a massive rough base or lip around its lower border, thus obtaining a secure base for her immediate work, and extra material where it will presently be required. The fingers of the left hand are then placed inside the collar to support the wall, whilst the inner border of the half-flexed right hand, or rather of the half-flexed little finger, is applied to the outside. She then proceeds to reduce

the substance of the mud wall, whilst at the same time she increases its height, by gradually scraping *upwards* the *Pl.* material of its exterior surface. This is done with the border of the right hand, the movement of that hand being always from below upwards. All the while she keeps moving around the pot.

The part of the vessel she is forming is the upper half, being the mouth, neck, shoulder, and the upper portion of the belly. Proceeding thus, and always working her material upwards, she gradually models the wall so that it tends inwards, forming the shoulder, which in its turn merges into the neck, and finally, by increased pressure of the inside or left hand, the broad upper border of the mouth of the jar is everted. From time to time, should the size of the pot require it, additional material is added to the upper ragged border of the wall, in the form of a roll of material shaped and sized like a heavy accountant's ruler. This is thoroughly blended with the upper border of the wall by kneading between the fingers before being further dealt with. The upper half of a jar is thus completed in the rough. It is then gone over again, but instead of the border of the little finger of the right hand, a piece of the neck of a gourd is similarly applied, being *Pl.* dipped into water from time to time. A perfectly smooth exterior surface is thus attained, whilst the pot, as a whole, is almost as symmetrical as if turned on a lathe.

With the sharp edge of the piece of gourd she cuts half a dozen horizontal grooves about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. apart around the neck. Two or more rounded lugs are attached to the side of the neck by mere pressure. The half pot is now finished. A few leaves *Pl.* are now placed around the base to prevent that part from drying, and it is left for three hours to harden sufficiently to handle.

The potter then picks up the vessel from the leaves on which it is standing mouth upwards, and replaces it on them



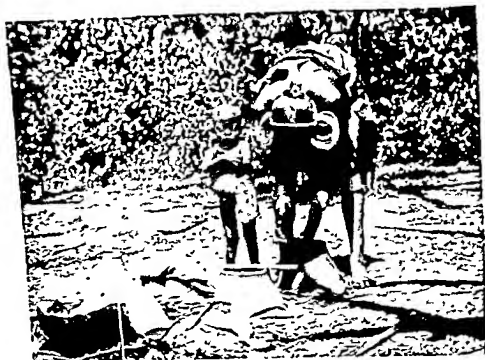


H. S. R. phot.

## POTTERY—FIRST STAGE

The pot here marked *b* is in the same state as the pot marked *b* in Pl. LXX. In this case however the curved morsel of gourd is being applied to the inside of the pot whilst the left palm affords the requisite external support.





W &amp; R phot

## POTTERY—FIRST STAGE

Shows.

- 1 The act of cutting in the horizontal grooves that surround the neck, and of smoothing off the lip.
2. That this is done before the lugs are put on.
3. At *a* a narrow-mouthed jar The upper half is completely finished. The base will be added presently, as in the case of the other shapes.
- 4 The custom of women shaving the head bare except at one fixed spot. Also the mass of bead ear-hoops that are worn in the cartilage of the ears. Cf Pl. ci. Fig 5.

*W S R phot*

## POTTERY—SECOND STAGE: STEP I

The perfectly completed upper half, ornamented with incised rings and with the handles added (Pl. lxx., c), is picked up and replaced mouth downwards. The spare clay that previously formed its ragged base is now brought into use.



H. S. A. phot

## POTTERY—SECOND STAGE STEI 2

As the material that formed the ragged base becomes used up, additional clay is added from time to time in the form of one or more sausage-shaped rolls. The new material readily blends with that previously used when kneaded with the fingers, and the whole becomes quite homogeneous.



W. S. R. phot

POTTERY—SECOND STAGE. APPROACHING COMPLETION

Shows the tool used—a portion of the neck and shoulder of a gourd (cf Pl. CXXVII Fig. 2)—the manner of holding the tool and the method of supporting the work with the fingers of the left hand placed inside it.



W. S. K. PH. 1

## POTTERY—BURNING

The pots are arranged in concentric circles on the ground in the open. Brushwood is placed between and on the top of them and the mass set light to.



*H. S. K. ph. 1*

BRINGING WATER TO THE HILL-TOP FROM THE RIVER  
AT THE FOOT

Shows.—

1. Method of carrying a load.
2. Earthenware jar, narrow-necked pattern; mouth stopped with leaves.
3. Quills in the cartilage and ring in the distended lobe of ear.
4. Lower border of shirt tied round neck to keep it clear of knees when walking.

## METHODS OF CARRYING LOADS

All loads, be they light or heavy, are placed by the Akikúyu between their shoulders. It is not customary amongst them to rest anything on the top of the head in order to carry it. Whether the article be bag or basket, load of firewood, round European bath, or sheet of galvanised iron, it will certainly somehow be corded up in such a way as to enable it to be slung from the forehead, whilst resting on the upper part of the back.

The length of the sling is so adjusted that the load shall rest comfortably on the shoulders and loins when the head and body are well bent forward. This sling is usually a strong leather strap, and it passes from one extremity of the longest axis of the load, across the forehead to the other extremity of the load. The arms are kept raised, the elbows are bent, and the strap is grasped on either side about the level of the ears, whilst every half hour or so, when travelling over some good piece of path, a change is made by interlocking the fingers of the two hands over the nape of the neck.

Pl.

The sling across the forehead prevents the load slipping downwards, whilst the effect of the hands grasping and straining on the sling, at the particular point indicated, is to keep the load well tilted forward and to ease the shocks associated with movement.

Sometimes, for a temporary change, the sling is removed from the forehead, shortened, and carried across the chest instead. Men do so more commonly than women.

This method of carrying a load points to the time when the whole of Kikúyu was one dense forest, intersected by narrow winding tracks of severe gradient and bad surface, that were often so overhung as to partake of the character of a low tunnel. In some parts these conditions still survive. To

travel through such country, even along the best native paths, with a load on the head is out of all question. Hence, though for generations past the conditions have changed, and fields and hedgerows have now taken the place of the tropical forest as the result of the labours of these industrious agriculturalists, nevertheless their method of carrying an object is that of the days that were.

The traveller in Kikúyu with foreign porters will do well to remember that nothing is more distressing to men bearing heavy loads on their heads than to have to reduce their stature, and, at the same time, to move forwards and downwards, *e.g.*, to pick their way down a steep hillside along a slippery overhung trail. As it is essential that they hold themselves erect, all they can do is to progress with bent knees whilst moving forward with extreme slowness, for fear of the load striking the unseen obstruction overhead.

A man on his own business considers about 40 lbs. a fair load if he has to transport it himself. Acting as a porter for others he will carry 65 lbs. A woman, fetching home firewood a distance of five to ten miles, of her own accord makes up her load to quite 100 lbs. A Kikúyu man is quite unequal to carrying a load that his women think nothing of. The writer has often tried to lift a woman's load of firewood from the ground, and found himself unable to do so, though he stands six feet, and is fairly powerful.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When travelling and beaver hunting with the Mic Macs in densely afforested country in Central Newfoundland many years ago, the writer had to carry a heavy load almost daily for four months in the Kikúyu way, which is the Mic-Mac fashion, so he can vouch from practical experience of its many merits. The Mic Macs, however, employ a second strap, which passes around the front of the shoulders and across the chest. This has the advantage that the hands and lower arms are left free, but the tight band constraining the chest is a grave drawback.





H. S. A. phot

## HARVESTING THE MAIZE CROPS

Shows method of carrying loads, and of dealing with the long upper garment, when need be, by bringing its lower border upwards around the neck. The lowest ornament around the ankle is a thong, on which are strung rings the size of a crown piece, made of stout wire. These jingle with each step.



*W. S. R. phot*

A MARKET SCENE

104b

## MARKETS

Markets for the exchange of native produce form an important part of native life, both from an economic and social standpoint. They are held at different places all over the countryside, and in more populous districts are frequently not more than some seven miles apart. The site chosen for a market is an open and convenient space on a hilltop. It is not selected as contiguous to any particular hamlets, but, in accordance with the general convenience of a scattered population, in some locality which forms a rallying point for several districts. A market is usually held on such a site every fourth day, and the dates are arranged so as not to clash with similar functions in the neighbourhood. An M'kikúyu therefore who is bent on commerce can, if he be so disposed, attend several markets in the course of a week.

The paths leading to a large market are filled, from about nine o'clock on the day it is held, with men, women, and children, all converging to the one point, and carrying with them the produce of their particular neighbourhood. A stream of women will approach from the western or wooded district, each laden with a bundle of firewood ; while from the opposite direction approaches another stream, bearing grain or other articles for exchange. In the evening the loads will have been reversed, the firewood will have been carried back to the homesteads in the food-growing districts, and the grain to the more newly settled country. Persons of every kind and trade may be found at this common meeting-place. The herdsman brings his stock for sale, the young man comes to buy accoutrements and adornments, the old man to buy a cup of native beer and gossip with his confrères. The market in the iron districts is a peculiarly interesting one. The iron ore is brought

by those who have "won" it, the tiny pigs by the smelters, while, from the woodland, loads of charcoal appear for sale wrapped up in the petioles of banana leaves.

Between eleven and one o'clock the fair is at its height, and the open space is a seething mass of black humanity, to the extent, in a large market, of some 4000 or 5000 souls. It is a special duty of the N'jáma or native police to keep order on these occasions, except them no man may carry arms in or near a market. By four o'clock the crowd is beginning to disperse, and the market-place is soon a desert strewn with litter and rubbish, while the sellers and buyers, more or less satisfied with their day's work, wend their way to arrive at their own firesides before sunset.

In 1903 barter was the sole means of exchange, and beads the only medium in which payment was accepted. To-day the use of money is generally understood, although from some out-of-the-way markets our headman would return to report that he had been unable to buy food, as coin was refused, and only certain commodities would be accepted. The Government altered the coinage towards the end of our sojourn, exchanging pice, the lowest denomination, for the more convenient cent. The native understood the older coin, and would take back goods they had brought for sale rather than accept its substitute.

The following is a fairly comprehensive list of goods sold on February 16, 1908, at the Wa-wer'-u market, situated on the confines of the districts belonging to the chiefs Wom-bu'-gu and Mun-gé respectively, and one of the most important markets in Kikúyu :—

A rupee=1s. 4d.; a pice=1 farthing.

Firewood, two sticks . . . . .	sold for 1 pice
Salt for goats, one small gourd . . . . .	" 1 pice
Salt earth, 1 clod . . . . .	" 5 pice
Platters for sifting corn (ki-ta-rú-ru) . . . . .	" 5 pice each

Monkey skins . . . . .	sold for	2 R. each
Serval-Cat skins . . . . .	"	2 R. each
Bird skins . . . . .	"	"
Native beer (n'jóhi), one small gourd . . . . .	"	1 pice
Bananas, fifteen . . . . .	"	1 pice
String bags, large, work of three months . . . . .	"	2 R. each
Mealing stones . . . . .	"	$\frac{1}{2}$ R. the pair
String, balls of . . . . .	"	1 pice each
Pots, earthenware, smaller . . . . .	"	5 pice
Do. do. larger . . . . .	"	8 to 10 pice
Bee boxes . . . . .	"	40 pice
Corn mortars, tree trunk . . . . .	"	10 pice
Planks for huts . . . . .	"	2 pice each
Planks for beds . . . . .	"	20 pice each
Doors for huts, made of basket work . . . . .	"	20 pice
Charcoal, 1 load . . . . .	"	5 pice
Fat, a horn full . . . . .	"	10 pice
Red earth, per block . . . . .	"	2 pice
Spears . . . . .	"	5 to 6 R.
Knives . . . . .	"	$\frac{1}{2}$ R.
Headdress, ostrich feathers . . . . .	"	2 R.
Tobacco, per packet . . . . .	"	1 pice
Honey, per jar of say 10 lbs. . . . .	"	2 R.
$\frac{1}{2}$ Gourds . . . . .	"	5 pice
Wicker baskets . . . . .	"	2 pice
Sugar cane . . . . .	"	1 pice for 2 sticks

All sorts of grain were also sold.

## ART

ANY attempt to portray persons or scenes by pictorial representation is unknown amongst the Akikúyu. Perhaps the nearest approach to such is the record of travel on the gourd of the dancing boy, hereafter given. Those caves which we have come across have been searched in vain for any drawings, nor could we find that any such existed. The native is, however, much interested in pictures and photographs, and with a little practice recognises familiar persons and scenes, even when these are depicted on quite a small scale.

Attempts at modelling animal figures are sometimes made by the children in the pot-making districts, but these are unburnt and incapable of preservation.

Models of the human form have been met with by us, but only on rare occasions, in connection with ceremonial dances. The image, of which a picture is given, is said to be made in three different forms by three different experts: one has the arms apart, one the hands at the face, and one the hands as in prayer.

Though their artistic achievements are not high, it would be a mistake to suppose that these people have no sense of colour, design, or what we should call taste. This is principally shown in their clothes and ornaments. Contrary to the usually accepted theory with regard to the black man, bright colours do not appeal to them, while the colouring of a man's garment when made from selected goatskins is very pleasing to the eye. There are also most definite ideas as to what is, or is not, beautiful in the form and colour of beads, but this is to some extent a matter of fashion.

Ordinary utensils and most weapons are not decorated, but an elementary knowledge of design exists, as shown in the *et seq.* shields (n'dóme) reproduced, which are those used by the boys



H S A oh

# A HYENA MOTHER AND HER LITTLE ONE

Description given by boys who had made the above out of sticks plastered with clay



# MODELLING A HUMAN FIGURE

To be used in some way in reference to asking for rain  
(see p 191)



when dancing prior to initiation. The designs, as will be seen, P. 1 vary considerably, but no explanation was forthcoming for the adoption of any particular pattern, other than that it was dictated by the fancy of the artist and perhaps also of the purchaser. Some of them are said to be of Masai origin.

The indented line uniformly shown on the inside is that whose use is said to have been commanded by God when He met the first M'kikúyu on Kénýa, and is reproduced also on the bodies of the dancers.

The colours employed are black, made from charcoal; red, or brown, which is an ochreous earth; white from chalk; and blue purchased to-day from the stores of the Hindoos.

Bee-boxes elaborately decorated are met with in some parts of Kikúyu, but not in that here described.

We have once seen a tree embellished with a floral design. No note as to the reason for this is forthcoming, but it is believed to be connected with its preservation as marking a boundary or for a similar reason.

## PICTURE RATTLES

Occasionally a boy is to be seen going about by himself, dancing, singing, and accompanying the song by shaking a gourd which he holds in his hand, and which has been P. 1 formed into a rattle. This proceeding he continues for a month or six weeks, and it is termed ku-i'-nya ki-shan'-di.

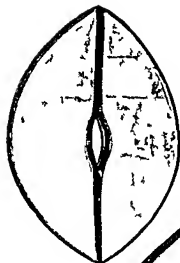
The words of the song are traditional; they are apparently gibberish, and convey nothing even to the performer. The gourd is scored by him with signs which constitute a record of his travel. Instruction in the art of this singing and writing is given to the boy who wishes to learn it, by a "warrior" or young man. The fee to a well-qualified teacher, who knows all the signs for writing, is one goatskin.

xvii.  
xviii.

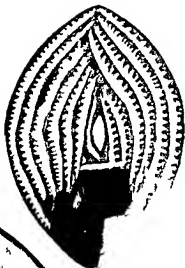
The two gourds depicted were obtained from two of these boys on different occasions. The signs were translated by two Akikúyu in our camp, who had themselves as boys gone about singing in this manner. Attempts were made to understand more fully the method of writing, by asking for other specified scenes to be depicted in the same way, but all such endeavours ended in failure. The art, it was pleaded, had been forgotten. We were told where one of its professors resided, but the locality was at some distance, and circumstances did not permit of a visit.

These gourds constitute, it is believed, the only form of drawing or picture writing. The shells which are affixed to the gourd form part of the story: those which are strung around it with chains of beads merely serve the purpose of decoration.

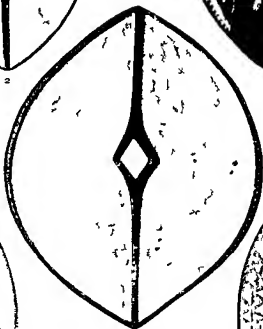
## DANCING SHIELDS



2



2a



1  
OUTS DE



3

1 / 1 Ma (A)

1 6 x 10.1

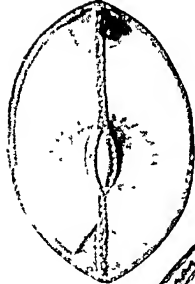


3a

2.1 x 1.4 in

3 1 x 10.1 in

1106



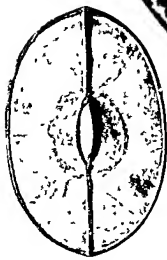
4



4a



4a  
INSIDE



5



5a

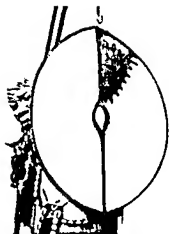
*Brit. Mus. [R]*

4.  $20\frac{1}{2} \times 14$  mm

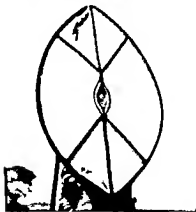
5.  $19\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$  mm.

110c

6



7  
nd  
9



7a

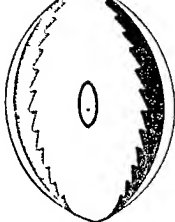
8



8a

A. K. phot

100

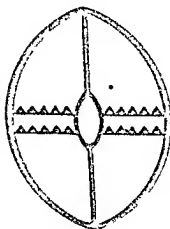


19.

M

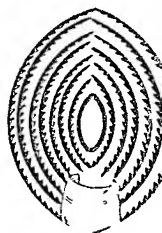


19a

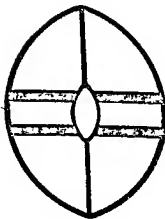


20

M



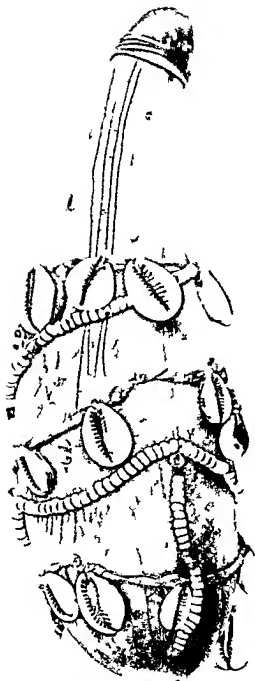
20a



21



21a



f 1A

PICTURE RATTLE.

og



## MUSIC

THE Akikúyu as a race are gifted with the musical ear. Their songs are almost always improvised solos with a chorus sung to a well-known air. Some hundreds of persons, strangers to one another, will join in a song with the dash and precision of a trained choir.

Each contingent of any large body of men, assembling for some fixed purpose at a given rendezvous, will thus strike up the same song as they arrive on the crest of the last hill before reaching the appointed spot. The effect is very fine, when perhaps half a dozen bands, each consisting of some hundreds of men, are thus converging on one point from different directions amongst the sea of hills.

There is no recognised conductor, but certain individuals, of fluent tongue and ready wit, often take the lead. One man at the head of a travelling party in single file will extemporise against another in its rear, with the result that the main body are kept in a roar of laughter at the sallies of the two champions, whilst supporting them with a hearty chorus.

The rhythmical movements of their dances, too, show their marked sense of musical time.

By song and dance they give expression to their emotions with a spontaneity that is quite foreign to us. From amongst a casual party of women of all ages the senior, with her face wreathed in smiles, will separate herself and advance to greet the stranger with the most comical steps and posturings, whilst at the same time she expresses general sentiments of amity on behalf of all in a song of high pitch. Similarly, when men are taken on a journey far from their own district they are liable to become suddenly home-sick after singing certain songs, and may desert in a body in consequence.

## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The only instruments for the production of sound are :

1. *Horns*.—(a) The straight, pointed one of the or and the graceful spiral of the greater kudu. In the side the horn, at its closed and pointed extremity, about 3 from the end, an opening, the size of the thumb-nail, is made to which the lips are applied. From it one note only obtained. This instrument is the war and dancing horn the men. The women never use it.

(b) A cylinder of bamboo about 2 in. in diameter, entire open at each extremity. The mouth is applied to one end. One note only is obtained. This instrument is used only by the women. Certain women blowing on these precede the dancers at circumcision festivals.

2. *Rattles*.—(a) An oval sheet of iron, with the ends brought to a blunt point—6 in. long—is folded over until the edges are only  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. apart—the form produced being something like that of the banana fruit. Within this cylinder several iron bullets are enclosed. It is worn strapped in horizontal position above the knee joint.

(b) A piece of thin iron is folded to the shape and size of the seed of a broad bean. In the fold two holes are punched. Through these holes a string is passed. The free edges of the metal are brought sufficiently close together to retain four small iron pellets. These rolling about give the sound. Half a dozen of these bells are threaded on a cord, and form the lowermost ornament of the ankle. They are known as gin-gi-gi (g=Eng. gate).

(c) A gourd is filled with small objects to form a rattle, and its mouth secured with adhesive gum. These are used by boys, who go about singing and dancing, and who inscribe on the gourd the story of their journeyings.

3. *Goat and Cow Bells*.—These are made the shape of the blossom of the Canterbury bell. They are made of two

pieces of flat iron united by a connecting bar, which forms the loop for suspension. Each piece is curved, so as to form half the bell. The sides of each piece are, however, not brought quite together. An iron clapper is fitted.

A similar bell is also carved from a hard wood. These have a wooden clapper. They are very uncommon.

Since writing the above, I have received the following Notes and Music from Dr. C. S. Myers, who has most kindly examined the wax records taken by us by means of the phonograph:—

“They (the cylinders) are full of interest. I enclose half a dozen of the airs written out. Unfortunately it is almost impossible to tackle some of the songs. The natives have sung so loudly that ‘one cannot see the forest for the trees.’ I have not attempted to determine the exact pitch of the notes, as that cannot be done in the originals. . . .

“The Dúmo song is very interesting for its rhythm. You will see that successive bars have the following number of beats per bar:—

$$\underbrace{2, 4, 4, 3 : 3, 2, 3, 3}_{24} : \underbrace{3, 3, 4, 3 : 3, 2, 3, 3}_{24}$$

We have here a grouping together of different measures to form larger periods, which are regularly repeated,—a striking characteristic of many primitive songs, and one of the best examples I have ever met with.

“If the fourth air is sung with the third, it should certainly be transposed a tone lower. . . .

“The tempo is very exactly kept, whether the measure is simple, as in No. 1 and No. 6, or complex, as in No. 2 and in No. 4, where two five-pulse bars are succeeded by a four-pulse bar.

“You will notice that the first four of the airs are each composed of four notes, the last two of three notes. Both major and minor thirds occur. The fourth occurs in four of

the six songs. Indeed, No 5 is built up very largely from the use of fourths. The fifth is employed only twice, namely, in No 5 and in No 4, but as in the latter this interval is sung *glissando* (I have indicated this by the mark —) there is some doubt about exactly fixing it. The minor sixth in No 3 is of interest, because in some verses of this song the first note, F, of the chorus is sung simultaneously with the last note, A, of the solo, forming the consonant minor sixth. The major sixth occurs in No 4.

"The songs show a considerable development of musical form. The alternation of chorus with solo, the alternation of one phrase with another, the rise and fall of the melody, are evidence of this.

"It is interesting to note that if F be considered the tonic of songs No 2 and No 3, the notes in each case form the scale

F, G, A, C,

and if No 4 be lowered a tone so that F is its tonic, its four notes run

F, A, C, D

No 6 transferred so that its key-note is F (instead of C, as written out) runs

F, G A

Thus these songs may be said to be based on a scale of a major second, major third, fifth, and major sixth (Scale I)

The other two songs if likewise transposed run

No 1 F, G, A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup>

No 5 F, B<sup>b</sup>, C<sup>b</sup>

The real tonic of these two songs probably lies a fifth lower, the apparent tonic being actually the dominant. If this be so, these songs, transposed to the scale of F, give the notes

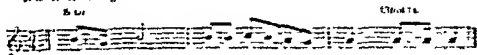
No 1 F, B<sup>b</sup>, C, D E<sup>b</sup>

No 5 F B<sup>b</sup>, C,

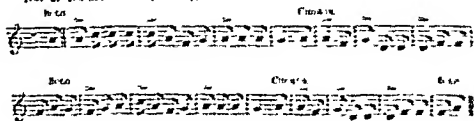
which gives a scale (Scale II) of a fourth, fifth, major sixth, and minor seventh, of which the middle pair occur in Scale I.

## EXAMPLES OF KIEČTU MUSIC.

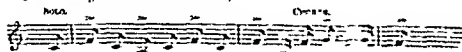
No. 1. Es-lin-g'is—A Girl's Song.



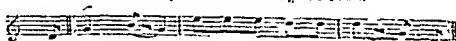
No. 2. Da-mo—A Girl's Song.



No. 3. Mu-gol-lo—A Warrior's Song.



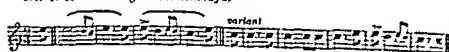
No. 4. First Vocal Accompaniment to the Mu-gol-lo Dance.



No. 5. Vocal Accompaniment to the Ku-lu-mi-si-a Dance.



No. 6. A War Song of the Akikúyu.





A Point of Interest



ENTRANCE TO HOMESTEAD OF THE CHILI WOMBÜGU

*N. N. P. & Co.*



A KIKUYU HOMESTEAD

Showing huts and granaries in the distance Mt. Kenya

Sketch A A



## PART II

### SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

*"It" (Archaic Law) "is full in all its provinces of the clearest indications that Society in primitive times was not, what it is assumed to be at present, a collection of individuals. In fact, and in view of the men who composed it, it was an aggregation of families."—MAINE'S Ancient Law.*

### FAMILY LIFE

#### HOMESTEADS

THE unit of all life in Kikúyũ is the family and the family homestead. Villages, strictly speaking, there are none, though here and there several homesteads may assemble in proximity to the dwelling of a chief. These clusters of mushroom-like huts are sown all over the country, in some parts with extraordinary thickness, in others separated by stretches of land lying barren and waiting its turn to be recultivated. They are almost always built on the hillsides, experience having taught that such positions are warmer in cold weather, or as the chill of evening comes on, than the damp, low-lying valleys.

Each homestead has its own little enclosure, and in old days each was invariably surrounded by a high green hedge or stockade, which was entered by an arch of greenery usually so low as to necessitate stooping; this served as an enclosure for the cattle, for defence, and for purposes of concealment. In the homesteads of very wealthy men, such as the chiefs, there are generally two compounds, an outer and an inner one.

The size of the homestead varies in proportion to the wealth of its owner. The poor man will have a single hut only for himself and his one wife; the rich man's will consist of eight or ten huts; the chief's of even more. Each wife is

entitled to her own house; and where there are several the owner has in addition one for his own accommodation. There is frequently also the "thin-gi'-ra," or hut for the young men, which acts as the guest-house. The "thingira" sometimes stands a little apart, and is the joint sleeping place or bachelor lodgings of the boy friends from several homesteads, who return to their respective families for food. A young man marrying generally builds his hut just outside, but in close proximity to the parental homestead; but such may sometimes be seen within the same enclosure. In either case it is easy to see that where the head of the establishment dies and the grown-up son becomes guardian of his father's wives, the arrangement works easily and naturally. The homestead also contains little barns or huge baskets for storing food which, except for the fact that they stand on legs, almost give the effect of an additional hut. As each wife possesses her own, the number of these forms a guide to the inmates of the establishment.<sup>1</sup>

The interior of the huts is quite dark, and visitors should take a candle. In the centre is the fireplace.<sup>2</sup> The wall space is partitioned off by sticks into small compartments which form the bedsteads. The bed consists of one plank, or, if this is unattainable, of small sticks closely applied. The head is higher than the foot. One partition usually serves as a cupboard and contains utensils. Small belongings are kept in a jar or sometimes in a bee box. Wooden stools are used.

I<sup>3</sup> have never been in a hut, and rarely in a homestead, which was not clean and orderly, the presence of the goats, which are taken into the huts at night, necessitating regular sweeping. The same usually applies to the bare ground of the homesteads inside the enclosure, which is as a rule swept up and kept neat in a way which shames the camping-ground of most Europeans.

Each homestead has also its own little estate, consisting

<sup>1</sup> Fl. xci

<sup>2</sup> p. 70

<sup>3</sup> K. B. — And so throughout "Family Life"

of the shambas, or plots of cultivated ground, belonging to the various wives, and usually also of banana groves. These are generally in close proximity to the dwellings, but may, if ground is not procurable, be at a little distance.

Owing to the very simple needs of the Akikúyu, a large population can support itself by agriculture in comparatively limited space, the result being to combine, from the point of view of the black man, all the advantages associated in the mind of the white man with both town and country life. The greater part of Kikuyu may thus be said to be one vast garden city of the most approved type.

Particulars from my notebook of a few typical homesteads, and the occupants of the various huts which they contain, may be of interest.

## *Homestead A Two huts*

- 1 A mother and daughter
- 2 Father and small boy

## *Homestead B Three huts*

- 1 Parents and small boy. Another son stated to be at Nairobi
- 2 Widow, said to be "a relation"
- 3 (At a short distance) Married son, wife, and first grandchild

## *Homestead C Two huts*

- 1 Husband and wife
- 2 Another wife and two children

## *Homestead D Five huts—home of a Medicine-man*

- 1 Principal wife, three children seen.
- 2 Wife and one young child
- 3 Wife and two children
- 4 Latest wife married six months.
- 5 Medicine-man

## *Homestead E Two neighbouring enclosures*

### *First enclosure—two huts*

- 1 Young man
- 2 His wife, had not yet bought another

### *Second enclosure—that of deceased father of young man—Four huts*

- 1 Widow and daughter just 'bought,' and going to her husband's home
- 2 Widow—children
- 3 Widow—do
- 4 Thingira—other sons of family

## *Homestead F One hut*

Father, mother, and children.

## *Homestead G One hut*

Widow living alone—daughter had married. Son living with friends in thingira. One other child dead.

## WOMEN

### POSITION OF WOMEN

THE stranger passing through the land who sees the women working with bent backs in the fields, or toiling along the road with huge loads of firewood, obtains little idea of the home life of a Kikúyu woman, and that little is erroneous. The position of such a woman in girlhood, wifehood, motherhood, and old age is in many ways preferable to that of her white sister. What it loses in breadth of interest, it gains in the increased certainty of the natural joys of home life, and with rare exceptions in the absence of wearing anxiety as to ways and means.

My first introduction to a Kikúyu home was by means of an old lady who came to our camp to sell bags. I went back with her to her hut to pay a return call. The winding path led along the hillside, with wide views over the smiling, undulating landscape, sinking away in the distance to the great Athi plains. We skirted the edge of the sacred grove, passed between patches of cultivated ground, to where, near the homestead, the young men of the party were sleeping in the sun, then down through springing corn to the little huts standing among a grove of bananas. My friend was a widow, and lived in one of them with her remaining child; another hut close at hand was the home of her elder and married daughter, who came with her baby to help to receive the visitor. We sat under the shade of the hut, and discussed the weather, the crops, and the grandchild, and felt that human and feminine interests were of more importance than the colour of skin.

A woman has no legal status. Theoretically her husband may treat her as he likes, without being amenable to tribal

justice, in practice she is protected by her initial value and by tradition. Custom prescribes the line between a man's work and a woman's, and this begins in earliest years,—the little girls make string bags, the little boys herd the goats. It will be noticed in one of the folk-lore stories that although the hero has been provided with one hundred wives, it is expressly stated that "as no children were yet born he was herding the goats himself"<sup>1</sup>

"We work in the fields, we cook the food, we bring the firewood, that is all," was the brief epitome given to me by the wife of an old chief, and though it does not entirely cover the ground, substantially it is true. The woman is essentially the home maker, the man fights to protect that home. As he may be away on war raids, the paramount duty of the care of the food supply falls on the woman. There is, however, no hard and fast line with regard to the work in the fields, a man may not unfrequently be seen aiding his feminine belongings, while certain parts of the work fall on him alone. The old saying with regard to the "magic of property" turning "sand into gold," is true amongst the Kikuyu. Cultivation establishes ownership. The plot of ground or shamba, which the woman tends, is looked upon as hers. She can take a pride in its success or failure. She prefers to be the owner of a large shamba, which can be the envy of her neighbours, regardless of the extra work it may entail. Each wife has her own little granary in which to store her corn, she does not share it even with other members of the same homestead.

The carrying of heavy loads of firewood and other produce is work to which, it is hardly necessary to say, the women are inured from their earliest childhood. Quite tiny girls may be seen trotting along by their elders carrying their own proportionate burden. A girl of about thirteen came into the camp one day at eleven o'clock, bearing a load of bananas

<sup>1</sup> p. 318.

generally head downwards, in the work of the day. The older children, as all the world over, act as nursemaids to their little brothers and sisters, and endeavour in quaint fashion to carry them after the manner of their elders. The children of both sexes are singularly quiet and well behaved; they are never to be seen playing games, and they seem to need no occupation. I have counted as many as twenty-two children together at one time, under the age of some fourteen years, all sitting quietly, and none of them engaged in any way, with the exception of some of the little girls who were making bags. This quiet apathy of childhood is in singular contrast with the energy put forth in movement and dances in later years. When a girl is from ten or twelve to fifteen years, comes the great day of her initiation into the tribe. No man would marry a girl who has not gone through these rites; but they do not marry very young, not apparently before sixteen or seventeen years, and possibly later.

These young years are very cheerful ones to the Kikúyu maiden. She of course assists her mother in the household and fields, but she has an amount of gaiety which many an English girl would envy. Almost every moonlight night she can go to a dance, where she chooses her own partner. The young men come in properly adorned and turned out, for if they did not, as they inform us, "none of the girls would dance with them."

#### BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE

A girl's betrothal is entirely her own affair. The leading wife of the chief Mungé was asked, "What I should tell the white women on my return to *England about the women of Kikúyu?*" "Tell them," she said, "two things. One is, that we never marry any one we do not want to; and the other is, that we like our husbands to have as many wives as possible."

A girl may occasionally be bespoken as a child by some



H S K phot

weighing 30 lb., which she had carried some 14 miles since daybreak. Sometimes the women go as much as 15 miles for firewood. Starting at dawn for the forest, running and laughing, and in high spirits, they do the distance in, say, three hours, arriving on the ground at 9 a.m. They then chop up the dead, dry, sweet-smelling pencil-cedarwood trees into lengths of about 5 ft., and each makes up for herself a load of some half-dozen pieces, weighing in all perhaps 100 lb. The load is then carefully secured, and slung with the strong leather strap, 2 in. wide and some 15 to 20 ft. long, which every woman possesses, or should possess, for the purpose. By the time the loads are all ready it is approaching noon. The women, therefore, rest till about 2 p.m. Then they pick up their loads and start homewards, where they will arrive about 7 p.m.: an hour after dark. It is not customary to sleep out and to spend two days on a trip, and it is only of late, since wide tracks have been cut and security established under British rule, that they have taken to going so far from home. This description applies to the old settled country from which the forest is now far distant. People still farther removed from it have to come and buy their wood at the home market of the wood-cutters; the purchasers, then, in their turn, carry the loads another 5, 10, or 15 miles. Their muscles become in this way so used to the strain, that when their male belongings state "this is a very heavy load, it is fit to be carried by a woman, not by a man," they are probably only stating a fact.

lxvii  
to Folk  
p. 299,  
a. The women also fetch the water. As the Akikúyu generally build their houses on the steep hill slopes and tops, the water for cooking and drinking has to be carried up from the valley bottom. The bigger children, boys and girls, and the women do this. The men never assist.

There are other duties, such as sewing skins, assisting to build huts, and so forth, which fall to the share of the



women; but it must be remembered in any attempt to compare the life of the primitive woman with that of her more civilised sister, that she is spared many arduous duties which are the portion of the latter. No spring cleaning has to be faced, no washing day appals, no children have to be got ready for school. There are many seasons when little work is required in the fields; firewood has only to be brought home occasionally. Frequently, when the homesteads are visited, the women may be found practically at leisure; their lot is incomparably easier than that of the ordinary working man's wife at home. The Kikúyu woman, as far as an outsider can gather, takes her position for granted. Things may be good, bad, or indifferent; they are all in the day's work. The old lady previously referred to declined to express any preference with regard to the various duties. I do not think that she had one. "When we are not working in the fields we carry firewood," was all that I could extract. Once, and once only, I got a glimpse of a woman looking at her lot from the outside. There was full moon, and we were travelling by night as the most pleasant method. Our caravan was joined by some native women who were journeying along the road. They chattered vivaciously to our men behind, and I presently asked what was the topic of conversation. "She says," I was told, "that it must be nice to be a white woman, and ride a horse and not carry a heavy load."

## EARLY YEARS

From the moment of her birth a girl baby is even more welcome than a boy; her work at home is valuable, and when she is marriageable she will fetch thirty goats. The Kikúyu baby makes its first acquaintance with the world from the point of view of its mother's back, where, secure in her cape in the form of a hood, it becomes inured to sun and flies, and takes part,

# PLATE XIII

## A CHISEL, AN AXE, AND A DIGGING-KNIFE

Fig 1 The small end of the iron (i-thar'-da) here shown is set into the butt of a pole some 7 feet long, in the line of the pole's longitudinal axis, and a ferrule of green rhinoceros-hide shrunk on to it. The lower border is rubbed to a keen cutting edge. A section of tree-trunk is first made somewhat concave with the axe, it is then reduced to a hollow cylinder by a succession of stabs with this tool. Thus are mortars and bee-boxes made. This chisel and the axe-blade are identical articles, it is simply a matter as to how they are set into the handle.

Length,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in. Width, max,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. Weight,  $12\frac{3}{4}$  oz

Fig 2 The Kikuyu axe (i-thar'-da). The handle is always made of the shape shown. To form the collar a piece of rhinoceros hide is cut  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. more than half the circumference of the axe head, and of the depth desired. The substance of the skin is then split, which its great thickness readily permits. A collar is thus formed, of which the front and the back are each half the substance of the natural skin, whilst the sides, or point where they unite, is the full substance of the hide. This collar is then driven over the axe handle, and so into position. Afterwards the axe blade is driven, through a cleft made in the face of the green hide collar, well home into the wood. The skin is of immense strength, and contracts considerably as it dries. The result is the axe blade is fixed immovably. This tool is strong, light, and exceedingly efficient. Every woman has one.

Length of handle, 22 in

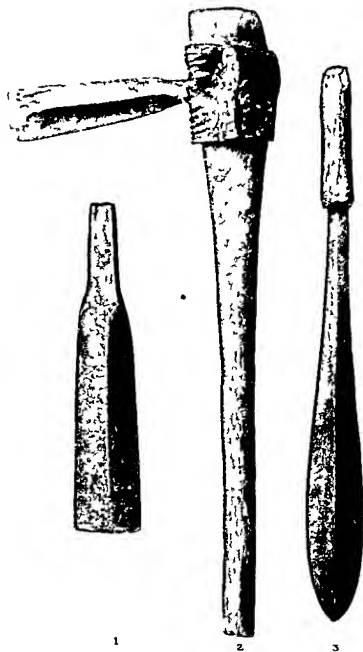
Maximum circumference over collar  $9\frac{1}{2}$  in

Fig 3 The agricultural digging-knife (ka hu vu), the only iron implement used in cultivating the soil

Length of blade,  $13\frac{3}{4}$  in. another is  $14\frac{3}{4}$  in

Weight  $13\frac{3}{4}$  oz. another is  $15\frac{3}{4}$  oz

124 b





A.P. phot

A FAMILY GROUP

Showing method of carrying infant

PL. NCV



*A R phot*

ACTING NURSEMAID

PLATE XCVI

THREE KIKUJI GIRLS

Shows

Brow band indicating maidenhood See PL. cii

Method of wearing upper garment

Ornaments Bead necklaces, ring in lobe of ear  
Straps of cowrie shells across the chest, bracelets  
and anklets of copper wire



*W S R phot*

older and wealthy man, but she would not be obliged to marry him on coming to years of discretion unless she so desired. Young warriors questioned on the subject, scoffed at the idea of buying child wives. A girl is also at liberty to break off her engagement even after the goats have been paid to the father, but due restitution must, of course, be made. I have been present at two cases for breach of promise. One was a small court held on the green just outside the homestead of Mungó, consisting of one "elder," the young men who knew about the case, and an official (n'jáma), and sat to arrange the return of the goats by the father of a girl who had changed her mind. The father went off straight away to get the goats. The other case was more complicated. It was brought for decision to the chief Karúri. Here, again, the lady had changed her mind, but there was no father living, and the goats could not be returned, for they had been eaten, and could not be replaced. The suitor pleaded that the girl should, under these circumstances, be held to her bargain, and judgment was given in his favour. This was, perhaps, not an unfair arrangement, seeing that the lady had certainly been a consenting party in the first instance, and had, no doubt, enjoyed her share of the booty. Karúri turned to me, after giving the decision, and asked pathetically what we did in England when people had debts to pay and no money to pay them with!

If the suitor is rich the goats are all paid up immediately; if not, they may be paid in two instalments, the first on his proposal being accepted, the second being delayed three or four months. Thirty goats and five or six sheep is the customary value of a girl; but the actual marriage will probably take place after twenty goats have been received, the remainder sometimes not being paid over till the eldest child is eight or ten years of age.

When in South Africa, immediately after the war, one of the native commissioners informed me that, owing to the



destruction of live stock, native girls in his district were being given in marriage without payment, but with the understanding that the first-born daughter of the marriage should be the property of the wife's parents

The first betrothal present, corresponding to our engagement ring, is a collarette made of whipped copper wire, with long pendant iron chain (mu hu ní o) Both the *fiancés* may continue to attend dances, but after the marriage has been arranged it is no longer correct for them to dance with each other That is "very bad," but "he can visit her, and they can talk"

As a very rare occurrence, an unmarried girl may occasionally be seen with three patches the size of a crown piece, one on either cheek, and one on the forehead These patches are composed of honey, or some 'adhesive matter, and a small aromatic seed This sign indicates that, unknown to her parent, she is off to a clandestine appointment, and safeguards her from all interference

An unmarried girl about to become a mother meets with the gravest disapproval from her parents It would be too much to say that this is entirely a matter of morals, the practical aspect of the case naturally also presents itself "The mother would make a great fuss 'Why do you go far? I like you to stay here, and if some one likes you they can buy you'" The girl's companions would also disapprove The man in such circumstances can either buy the girl, and take the child, or pay ten goats and one sheep, in which latter case the girl and child remain at home The sister of a leading man was severely beaten by him, but would not betray the name of the father of her child For any second child born under similar circumstances only a small compensation is required say five goats It was very definitely stated that the marriage value of a girl with such a history would be diminished, but, on the other hand, a prospective husband might appear who did not know

of the past, or who did not object, and the parents would naturally make the best bargain possible. The husband takes also the child. A rather curious history which came to our notice was that of an unmarried girl who bore a female child. The father paid up the regulation ten goats. Later, the girl, being still unbought, thought that she would like a husband, and the same man was willing to take her to the extent of paying six extra sheep; but as the consideration was so small, the child in this case remained the property of the woman's father.

The account of a marriage is best given in the words of one of our Kikúyu servants, who was in the happy position of having recently completed the payment for his bride. It is, I think, of sufficient interest to warrant transcribing at length. It was given most fluently, the various *dramatis personæ* being represented by coins, matches, beads, etc., to make quite sure that I was following the story correctly.

"The young man says to the girl, 'I have many goods at my father's, and you do your work very beautifully, I should like to buy you,' and she says, 'Yes.' So he goes to her father, and the father asks the girl, 'Do you like the man very much?' and she says, 'Yes.' The mother says, 'You don't like any one else?' and she says, 'No.' The young man has made two gourds of native beer (n'jóhi), a big one and a little one, which have been brought by two friends, and the girl takes the n'jóhi and pours it into the horn of an ox, and the father says, 'If you do not like this man I will not drink,' and then he drinks; then the beer is poured out again, and the mother drinks, and the friends who have been called drink. This is in the morning. The young man goes back and tells his father that he wants to buy the girl, and the father asks, 'How many goats her father wants?' and he says, 'Twenty.' The father says it is all right, and they go and tell the young man's mother. In the evening, when the goats come home, the

father picks out twenty, and the young man's friends take them to the girl's home, and the man himself follows behind and delivers the goats, and he returns to his own home. His father asks if it is all right, and the young man says, 'Yes,' and goes to his mother's house to get food and to the boy's hut (*thingira*) to sleep. He may, however, take only ten that day, if so, the next day he does not go to the girl's, because he has not paid up all the goats. But in the evening, when the goats come in, he gets the other ten, and his two friends<sup>1</sup> one behind and one before, and himself last, take them to the girl's home. The girl stays in the house, and the father looks at the goats and says they are all right, and the young man goes home, and says that he will want a sheep to-morrow.

"The next day he and his friends, one before and one behind, take the sheep to the girl's home, and he goes back, and goes to the shamba and cuts sugar-cane, and makes more native beer.

"The day following, all the bridegroom's party, his own friends, his father and his friends, his mother and her friends, all go to the bride's home. The mother carries a little gourd of beer, and one of her friends a big gourd, and two other friends carry one cluster of bananas each. The bride's father and mother have collected friends, but the girl works in the "shamba" (her mother's plot of ground) and does not appear.

"Two friends of the mother of the girl take the two gourds, and two others the bananas, and all women go into the house. The girl's mother produces two gourds of gruel and gives one to the young man's father and friends and one to the young man and his friends, and the two mothers and their friends dance the 'Ge-ti ro'.

"Then the father of the girl goes inside the house and

<sup>1</sup> These friends form convenient witnesses if an action has subsequently to be brought for breach of promise of marriage necessitating the return of the goats paid.

brings out the big gourd of beer, and says to the young man and his friends, and to the young man's father and his friends, 'Have you finished drinking gruel?' and they say, 'Yes' And the young man and his friends say, 'We do not drink beer,' so they go away The girl's father brings out two half gourds, his friends drink out of one, and the father of the young man and his friends drink out of the other The two fathers retire and talk, and the girl's father says, 'Your son likes my daughter very much, and has brought the goats, and I have raised no objection' Then they join the circle, and kill and eat the sheep, and finish drinking

"The father of the young man and his friends go back to the father's house, and the friends of the girl's father all go away except one

"The girl's mother brings out the little gourd, and the young man's mother and her friends come out at a little distance from the girl's father and friends, and have an empty gourd, and drink beer the girl's mother and friends drink inside the hut Then the young man's mother comes inside the hut and asks for her gourds, and the girl's mother gets grass, and puts two pieces inside each gourd (this is a very old custom), and stays in her hut, and two of her friends give them to two of the friends of the young man's mother, and the mother and her friends retire home

"The girl's mother divides one cluster of bananas between her friends and keeps one for herself, and the father takes his one friend to look at the goats and the party is finished "

It will be seen in this account, which reminds one of some of the adventures of the renowned Alice, that it is the bride who is absent from the feast, and the mothers who have the dance This last being a legitimate outlet for satisfaction which might commend itself elsewhere It must lessen the cares of the hostess, when the visitors provide the victuals

Sometimes three, or, if the family is wealthy, as many as four sheep are brought for the feast. Indeed, the bridegroom's family are all through in their very proper places as the obliged parties. The young men's teetotal principles are altogether admirable, while it will be noticed that, according to etiquette, the women retire into the hut, so that they may not see the men eat meat. When the scene closes after the departure of the guests, the father taking his particular friend to see the live stock, and the mother and her friends having a little extra refreshment, we feel ourselves entirely at home.

The story continues "The third day the young man comes to the girl's home and says that he is going to dig a big shamba for her, and he gets his friends, and they all go and dig a big plot. He need not ask any one where it is to be except his own father. The girl goes and sees the shamba, but does not go anywhere near the hut of her future mother-in-law. She sees the shamba that it is a beautifully big one, and she comes back and tells her mother, 'He has got ready a beautifully big shamba.' He says to his mother, 'Did you see the girl,' and she says, 'No.' He says to the girl, 'Why did you not come to see the shamba?' and she says, 'I did come.' Then the girl and her two friends go and cultivate the shamba, and when all is ready the young man and his two friends take some beer, and go and ask the father's leave to take the girl, and he says, 'Yes.' The girl is in the house. When they have finished drinking, the young man and his friends go and cut sticks for the house and build it, and his mother puts grass on the top. When all is ready the girl is out walking, or working in the shamba, and the two friends of the bridegroom seize her and carry her off to the new hut, and she makes much noise. The bridegroom does not come near her, but sleeps in his father's house, and the girl's friends bring her food. She weeps four days. The mother-in-law

brings her fat, and she puts it on her head, and two girl friends of the bridegroom accompany her, and she goes to her mother's house and stays three hours, and makes a noise in the house of her mother. Then the two friends go back with her and leave her, and the bridegroom comes and sleeps in the hut. Afterwards he gives the remaining ten goats to her father, and one more."

The size of the ground prepared for the bride is one and a half to three acres, and her father has to inspect and pass it as satisfactory. Productivity is the criterion, not size. If there are already one or more wives in the homestead which the bride is entering, the whole of the shambas are readjusted, so that each wife may have a share in the new ground. The father's wedding present is two hundred roots of the arum lily plant. He also gives her the iron collar worn Pl. xcviij by women. If he is wealthy this is made by hand by the native smithy; if not, trade wire has to suffice. The value of a large hand-wrought neck iron is two goats. There is evidently from the foregoing narrative a certain amount of customary modesty connected with a girl's first visit to her future domain, and it was subsequently stated, "even if she had been to see the shamba, she would tell the young man she had not." The only further contribution to the new establishment on the part of the bride's family are the hearth-stones. These it is the especial duty of her mother to provide. She and the girl go down together to the riverside to select them. If the mother is dead, the duty falls to the daughter herself.

The absolute seizure of the bride by the bridegroom's friends, is, no doubt, an interesting survival of marriage by capture. Her state of mind must be somewhat nervous when she knows that all preliminaries are accomplished and any moment her captors may appear to bear her off, "like a porter's

load," as one woman described it. Her struggles and cries are, of course, as conventional as the tears of the early Victorian bride <sup>1</sup>

I was fortunate enough to see the first visit of a bride to her old home. The leading lady of the district, Wan'-gu, who acts as chief under the present régime, had been to the camp in the morning for a chat, and had mentioned that this local event might be expected during the day. About three o'clock a great noise was to be heard, and people seen running over a hillside a short distance away. Following the sounds as quickly as I could, I found myself at a little homestead under the hill in time to have a good view of the returning bride, who had just arrived. She was a well grown girl of about sixteen years or possibly more, very smartly turned out, her dress and hair freshly adorned with fat and red ochre. She had sobbed herself into an absolutely hysterical condition, and was being held very tenderly by her mother and one of the other mothers of the homestead. A bunch of leaves did its usual duty as a pocket handkerchief. There was no large concourse of neighbours, but a bevy of other girls, in ordinary work a day attire, looked on unsympathetically.

Presently the girl, still sobbing noisily, went into the hut with her mother and some friends, and was followed by two girls whom I had not before noticed, these last were turned out in gala fashion, somewhat after the manner of the bride, and were, I presume, the relations of the bridegroom, who, according to subsequent information, each hold one of the hands of the bride on her return journey. As it seemed better not to intrude on the family party, I sat down on a log under the eaves of another hut with one of the mothers of the establishment, and conversed on the event of the day. The heroine had, I was told, been carried off four days before, and

<sup>1</sup> It need hardly be said that the tears of a Kikôyu girl can also on occasion be very genuine and that she can clearly explain they are such.

had, in proper manner, cried on the bed ever since. She had now come back, attended by girl friends, for a few hours with her mother; the fat used for her adornment had been a present on the third day from her husband's mother, who would continue similar gifts for about two months. The bride was much pleased with her new house. She was the first wife, there were many goats, and the bridegroom was charming; altogether, it was a most satisfactory marriage. The conventional howling continued inside the hut, despite of these rosy prospects, up till the time I left.

The two families continue social intercourse after the marriage. I have seen about twenty men drinking native beer outside a hut, and been told that the son-in-law had brought the drink to the house of his mother-in-law, and that the women were also enjoying it inside the hut. The daughter had married about a year before, and lived at a little distance, but she and the child had not come over to the festivity.

On another occasion some camp arrangement had to be given up, for all the younger men of the district had gone away to eat sheep. The party, in this instance, was being held at the new home of a girl who had married to another district, and was connected with the birth of her child. The child might, we were told, be any age, but such an entertainment would not be given unless one had been born.

## POLYGAMY

Polygamy is of course an integral part of the tribal system. It is not merely a question of domestic arrangement, but of social organisation. The poverty stricken condition of the "rich" white man in respect of wives aroused unflinching interest. My husband's attempted explanation, "that a white woman preferred to have her husband to herself," fell extremely flat. "Exactly an opposite view," Mungé assured us,



as we sat round the camp fire, "obtained among the best people in Kikúyu. The first wife would soon say, 'Why have I to do all the work, why do you not buy another wife?'" The opinions of his spouse on the same lines have been already quoted. "If," she said, "there is much food or drink to get ready, it is very hard work for one, it is very easy for many." The first wife also retains her pre-eminence, and her child is in any case regarded as the eldest, if it even should have been actually born after that of a later wife. She is usually about the same age as her husband, the man's later wives are considerably younger than he is, and the older he grows the more difference there is in age between himself and his latest acquisition. Sentiment and prestige are thus on the side of being an early comer in the matrimonial establishment, on the other hand, some girls of a practical turn of mind prefer to marry older and richer men.

It is quite usual to come across a man with only one wife, many such exist, but this is by force of circumstance, and is a sign of poverty. Two or three wives is a fairly ordinary allowance, while the rich man has six or seven. The chief Karuri is said to have as many as sixty, who perform a useful office in looking after his interests in various parts of the country.

It is impossible to suppose that there are no heartburnings and jealousies in a homestead, but I have never heard of such and the fact that each wife has her own hut, shamba, and independent establishment, places the whole on the footing of a village under one head man.

There is no doubt that the endeavour to establish monogamy is, and will be, the greatest difficulty in the way of the spread of the Christian religion. "The missionaries" according to one M'kikuyu in our employ, a person of considerable influence, "tell us that a man should have only one wife, if they teach such nonsense they may as well go away."

On the other hand, it is difficult to see how polygamy can

permanently exist under the new conditions caused by the British conquest. Tribal war has been suppressed, and such investigations as it has been possible to make confirm the natural anticipation that the births in each sex are fairly equal.

## CHILDREN

The Akikúyu are a prolific race. Children are much valued amongst them, and neither of us have ever seen a woman or child ill-treated. The childless woman, as amongst all primitive people, is much to be pitied; not only does she suffer in her natural affection, but loses in the favour of her husband. Recourse is had to the Medicine-man, and the usual killing of a goat and drinking of native beer form part of a prescription which is said to be efficacious. The medicine known as gon'-du,<sup>1</sup> said to be a cure for sterility, is one of those given to the Medicine-Man on his initiation. It is difficult to arrive at figures, even approximately correct, with regard to the size of the families. The natural method of conversing with the mothers as to the number of their children is soon found to be, to say the least, a tactless proceeding. It is considered most unlucky to give such figures, a sentiment similar, no doubt, to the aversion felt in Old Testament days to the numbering of the people. The inquiry is politely waived, with a request to "come and see." This naturally by no means fulfils the purpose, as the children are rarely, if ever, assembled at one time. The girls may be working in the fields, and the little boys away herding the goats. My next plan of campaign was hardly more successful. I visited the huts, and made full inquiries as to their occupants, usually entering them myself to count the beds in use. This district visiting was of the greatest value in coming into touch with the lives of the people, but not from the point of view of statistics. The young and growing family was of

<sup>1</sup> See p. 253.

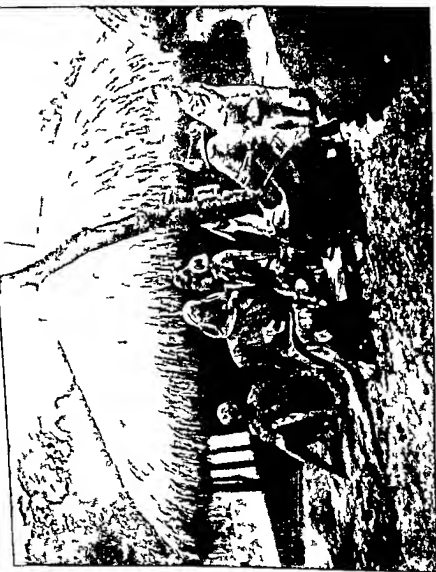
little use for my purpose, while of the older and completed ones, the girls were married and had homes of their own, and the boys were not unfrequently reported as at work at Nairobi. I visited some forty six huts in this manner, but for one reason or another have only felt the returns from three sufficiently reliable to be included in the following figures. The method finally hit upon had the advantage of giving the greatest result for the least labour. The objection to giving family statistics was discovered not to be in force amongst other members than the parents, at any rate, it did not seem to affect those Kikuyu boys who were continually in touch with us. These answered readily any questions as to the number of their father's wives, their grandfather's wives, and their respective children and seemed to have a good acquaintance with their relations. The obvious drawback is that the statements are probably incomplete. Those with whom they were not well acquainted would most likely escape their memory, and this would certainly be the case with children who had died in early infancy. The figures, therefore, are given for such interest as they may possess and in no way pretend to scientific accuracy. On the other hand they may, I think, be relied on, for the reasons given as erring on the side of under, and not of over, statement. A family means in every case the children borne by one wife only.

Forty nine families were reported as having in all 75 boys, 75 girls 6 sex unstated, total, 156

Fourteen of these families were presumably still incomplete i.e. comprised a first child or very young children only, and two were those of mothers who had died young. These comprised 9 boys 15 girls, total 24

If these figures are subtracted the 35 remaining families give a total of 132 children or a fraction under 4 children per family.

Only 13 children were reported as having died young



A A 7A1

# WIVES AND CHILDREN OF THE CHIEF WOHUCC

Shows head shaven with exception of tuft on crown (custom of younger women) iron collar—marriage gift of father (p 131)—and beaded rings (Pl c 1 fig 5)



A MILITARY WOMAN

H. S. R. M.

a return which would give a death-rate of only about 84 per thousand, as against 138 per thousand in England, and which is obviously of no value. The returns for Mungé's family, which I believe to be the most accurate, show for ten wives, several recently married, 21 children, of whom 4 had died in infancy.

The size of the families was, on the whole, very uniform. 3 to 5 children each, but the average is raised by two cases. One that of the chief N'duini, who stated that his mother had borne 14 children, 5 of whom were boys, 3 girls, and the remaining 6, sex unstated. The other was that of the family of one of our retainers, the only survivor of 9, the remaining 8 having died of starvation during a great famine. He, as the sharp boy of the family, had been in service with a white man, and alone weathered the storm, his emotion as he spoke of it was very pathetic. Only two instances were given of childless marriage.

### OLD WOMEN

"A woman of fifty," says Sutro in one of his plays, "is like a policeman in Piccadilly, she can tell you the way to almost anywhere." Unfortunately in a progressive civilisation, the ways from Piccadilly are, metaphorically at any rate, liable to alter in the course of a lifetime. There are no such disadvantages in a stationary existence, and the amount of wisdom or the reputation for it, which can be accumulated in half a century is prodigious. It must be admitted that part of the deference paid to advancing years, whether in man or woman is due to fear. Old age has something uncanny about it, and old persons could probably "make medicine" and work havoc were they so inclined.

When her first born is initiated into the tribe a woman

shaves her head entirely and permanently, becomes entitled to the dignified appellation of "Mu-te-mí-a," and puts on copper earrings, termed "ki-chan'-ga." The only reluctance I have seen to increasing age came not from a woman, but from a man; the chief Mungé would not allow his senior wife to wear these particular copper earrings, "because he did not like to feel so old." There are not precisely "votes for women," as they do not take part in the judicial councils; but in one instance the head chief, Karúri, has appointed a woman to be his lieutenant in a certain district, where she reigns with much capacity, and diplomatically adds prestige to her position by dressing exceedingly well. It is said, probably with truth, that she has bought her husband another wife.

Under certain circumstances, such as when the chief Wombúgu married a new wife, the choice of a site for the new hut is relegated to a committee of elders, five men and five women. Wombúgu's brother, who gave an animated account of this function, which he had just witnessed, was asked what would happen if the respective parts of the committee disagreed. "The old ladies," he replied, "would have their way, because," he added emphatically, "it is a great work to have borne a child." A young warrior is taught to get out of the road for an old woman. The women do not take part in the sacrifices to God, though one who is alluded to hereafter described herself as the "wife of God," and seems to have established a sort of cult. She appears to have been a personage of considerable character. The mothers in Kikúyu also take their full share in ritual observances connected with initiation. A man anoints the candidates for initiation (male and female) with "fra," an old woman follows and anoints with oil. The self-reliance and dignity of the older women is remarkable. Such an one will come to pay a formal call at the camp, braving without a qualm the scores of porters,

Swahili servants, and sentry on guard to converse through an interpreter with a foreigner, a proceeding which would surely strike fear into the bosom of many a middle-aged female at home. It is perhaps fair to say that these were women of social position. The best, as Browning tells us, is reserved for the last. When a woman is very old, "so old that she has no teeth," she is then "filled with intelligence," and on her death receives the high honour of burial, instead of being put out for the hyenas to devour. Can respect go further?

A tribute is due to the chivalry shown by Kikúyu chiefs to a white woman. On two occasions, in different districts, when I have been alone in camp, the neighbouring potentate has taken me under his care, and come up once or twice daily to see that things were going well and I was in need of nothing, such as milk or firewood, which he could supply. One of these chiefs besought me to pitch my camp nearer to his homestead, as "he would not like a white woman who was visiting him to be eaten by a lion," a sentiment, needless to say, endorsed by the visitor.

#### DRESS OF WOMEN

The little boy runs about as nature made him, but the smallest little girl is never seen without a leather apron (*mwan'go*). In addition to this indispensable garment there is worn a petticoat (*mu-zú-ru*) 24 in. by 21 in., oblong in form and somewhat pointed at the end of the lower corners; it is fastened by strings round the waist. The upper part of the body is protected by a cloak (*n'gu-o*) 47 in. in its greatest length. The top edge of this garment is straight, 41 in. in width, and then gradually diminishes in breadth, the lower half being oval in form. This is also tied, and is worn



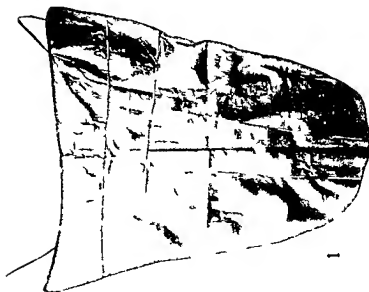
either over one shoulder and under the arm, or over both, or indeed in any way which suits the fancy of the wearer. When at work it is sometimes abandoned altogether. It appears to be worn for warmth and not with any idea of concealing the figure. Sewing is done by means of a straight awl and pointed thread. A bead is frequently strung before the thread is passed through the hole. The thread is of fibre or sinew.

Elaborate hairdressing is left to the men. A woman shaves her head entirely, save for one small tuft at the back. With advancing years, custom ordains that even this shall disappear. It has been difficult to understand the rapt gaze of visitors to the camp, till it was found that it was directed to the unshaven head of the white woman. A head such as is occasionally seen covered with hair, is in a woman a sign of ill health, under which condition it is considered beneficial to allow it to attain its natural length.

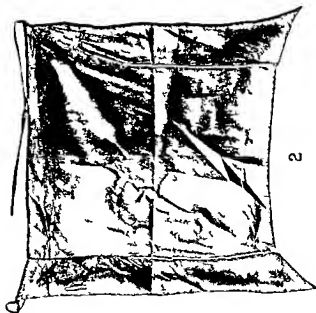
All girls at their initiation wear the becoming brow band of beads and shell disks. This ornament indicates maidenhood, and is very generally, although not universally, worn up till the time of marriage. The ornaments, with more or less definite association with particular epochs in life have been already alluded to. These are the necklace, usually the first betrothal present, the collar of iron, commonly the wedding present of the father, and the spiral copper ear rings, the sign of a woman with an initiated child.

The girdle made of beads and worn by all women, and method of wearing is shown in illustration.

The armlets, anklets and most of the ear ornaments are similar to those worn by the men, but a form of ear ring peculiar to women are large circles of beads fastened in the upper part of the ear. These are bought in the markets for 1 pice (= 1 farthing) each, and the ambition of the women is to have 32 in each ear.



1



2

B. & M. (K)

Chok

WOMEN'S DRESS

1 or 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

Sk 1

(See p 139)

# PLATE CI

## DRESS AND ORNAMENT OF WOMEN

1, 2, 3 Examples of the *ri'-ri*, an ornament worn by initiated women, and by girls when dancing prior to the initiatory ceremony (see Pl. cvi p. 160b). Two are worn, one in front and one behind, by means of a strap round the wrist. They are usually kept hung up in the mother's house as an ornament.

The terminals of the fringe of 1 and 2 are *mi-hun' gu*—the claws of the ant bear. They are very light, being thin and hollow, and jingle together like sleigh bells.

- |   |   |                                      |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Size, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ in | , fringe, including claws, 3 to 4 in |
| 2 | " $6 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ in                | " " " 3 in                           |
| 3 | " $8 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ in                | " $2\frac{1}{2}$ in                  |

4 Very thin sheepskin leather apron (*mwan gu*), such as is invariably worn by every female.

Size,  $9 \times 10\frac{1}{2}$  in

Length of leather tape, 24 in

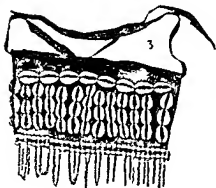
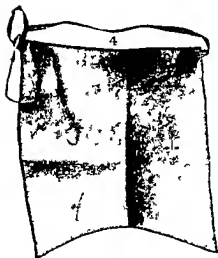
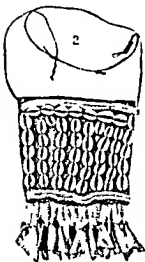
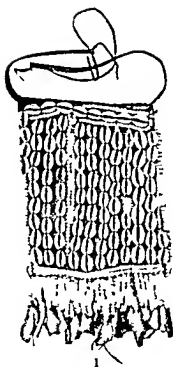
See Pl. c p. 140c

5 Ear rings (*lu hang i*) worn in the cartilage of the ear by women. Made of very small beads threaded on fine wire. Each end of the wire is turned back to form a hook. The spring of the wire keeps each hook straining against its fellow. About thirty may be worn in one ear but fifteen is the more usual number.

The diameter of each hoop is  $3\frac{3}{4}$  in

Thirty hoops weigh exactly 4 oz

For these ear rings in wear see Pl. xcvi



## HEADBAND

HEADBAND (Mu ni or' o wa mu tu-i)

Worn by girls at the ceremony of their initiation, and afterwards until they are married

The following description is taken from four specimens. Each consists of a strip of thick leather (c-c), 1½, 1½, 1½, 2 in long, pierced with holes, through which pass the threads (made of bark) on which the rows of beads are strung. The ends of the threads are then brought together and whipped (d)

The whole area marked aaaa, in all specimens, is composed of white beads exclusively. Three specimens consist of nine rows of beads, one specimen of eleven rows

The top row, aba, in each specimen, consists of white beads. The next, and every alternate row, of blue beads

The nine rows are retained in position as a flat band by means of a lacing that is indicated, as a fine black line, at point l point a and elsewhere

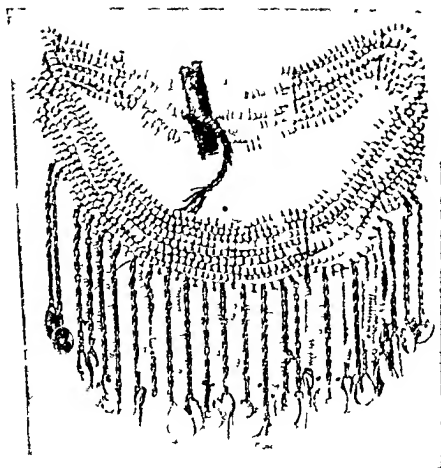
The fringe in all specimens is about 3 in deep. It is of equal length throughout. The numbers of separate cords constituting the fringe are respectively fifty nine, forty four, fifty two, fifty

Every alternate cord is of chain, and terminated by a concavo convex disc of bone, which varies from the size of a sixpence to that of a shilling

The intermediate cords are of milk white beads, with no terminal

The length of each headband is 18 in. Each row of beads of headband is very slightly shorter than the one below it. Accuracy of fit is essential for use and this is obtained by straining on cords (d) through leather piece (c-c)

For use see Pl. xviii p. 124 g



*Brit Mus (K)*



*W S P phot*

#### DANCING DRESS

A woman specially decorated with banana leaves for the initiation festival, and bearing in her left hand a length of bamboo, which she uses as a horn immediately before posturing in a peculiar manner. From time to time she rushes about the ground brandishing her husband's club, which she is privileged to have for the day on this one occasion only.

Ordinary dancing does not demand any variation in the clothing of the women. On the occasion, however, of a big dance, a woman may add to her becoming and decorous dress an exceedingly short skirt made of banana leaf, much like that of an Italian ballerina. It is not unusual to see a woman with her abdomen adorned by a pattern formed of small raised scars. These are made by small cuts, which are artificially irritated. No female wears any sort of head or foot gear.

The following terms are employed in speaking of women:—

KA-RE'-GO.	. . . .	A small girl.
KI-RE'-GU.	. . . .	A big girl not yet initiated.
MOI-RE'-TU	. . . .	„ after initiation.
ME-HI'-KI.	. . . .	A woman, betrothed or married, not yet a mother.
WA-DAT	. . . .	* A mother of young children: she is addressed and referred to as M'wa-na mû-ke.
ME-TI-MI'-A	. . . .	The mother of one or more initiated children.
I-RE'-TI	. . . .	A toothless old woman.



## INHERITANCE

WEALTH is held in immense respect amongst the Akikuyu, in a manner which is, it must be confessed, somewhat depressing, when the ideal simple life appears at last to have been reached. The prestige of the European goes up enormously with each tent added to his possessions, and the value of the various mounts of the white men in the district are most carefully compared. Amongst themselves the man who can add goat to goat and wife to wife, is deemed fortunate and happy, the poor man is looked upon with that pity which is akin to contempt. It is even thought, as will be seen, that after death a wealthy man will be somehow better off than his more indigent brother.

The object of such accumulation on the part of the native is not very patent to the European. No M'ikuyu wants riches to alter his manner of life, for purposes of travel, or to indulge expensive tastes. With one or two exceptions, in the cases of those who have come under white man's influence, the richest chief lives in precisely similar quarters to the poorest man. One would imagine the endless acquisition of wives would pall, and while a number of goats are no doubt enjoyed for food, and useful to defray the costs of illness, there is obviously a limit to what one man can use. The solution may perhaps be found in the fact of the influence which is brought by wealth, in savage not less than in civilised society. However this may be, the death of a rich relation is in Kikuyu, as possibly at times elsewhere, by no means an unmitigated source of sorrow, and quite the usual interest attends the testament.

The difficulties of will making are proverbial, even when the testator has only one family to take into account. They become serious to contemplate when there are to be con-

sidered the claims of three, six, or ten prospective widows, and the same number of families, comprising children of every age Property, on the other hand, is a simple matter. Translate "real" and "personal" by shambas and goats, and we have a comprehensive catalogue of possessions; to this, wives should perhaps be added, though they occupy a position apart

An old man on his deathbed calls for his family and the old men, and in their presence makes the final division of the goods He has theoretically absolute power of appointment; in practice, his bequests are largely dictated by custom

It is well to bear in mind the fact that in an uncivilised community, rights of property can only exist where they can be enforced by the strong arm Possession must therefore pass to an adult At the same time, the claims of minors and women may be, and are, safeguarded by custom, and it is unwise to assume that because property is said to have been inherited by such and such an individual, he is necessarily absolute owner, his rights may very possibly be only those of immediate benefit with responsibilities attached, and his ultimate position that of trustee Meum and tuum are naturally less clearly defined in primitive than in civilised society

The whole of the estate—women, shambas, and goats—passes by custom to the custody of the heir at law If the *eldest son is an adult* he takes possession of the property He inherits all his father's widows, but only takes as his wives any in excess of three, and these only if they have not borne more than one child It is customary for a man who has married three wives not to add to their number till his eldest born has been received into the tribe, the younger wives, therefore, are about the same age as the heir There is no odium attached to a widow preferring to live with another man, but any children born are reckoned as of the family to which she

legitimately belongs, and the father could not claim the mark for any daughter by such a connection

The position of the eldest son does not, however, convey primogeniture in our present sense of the word. The bulk of the property is held by him on behalf of the family, and its division is largely dictated by the will of his father, the younger son receiving in the end the same share as the eldest. "He" (the testator) "would give ten goats to the younger sons, and tell them when they want meat or fat or dowries for wives, to ask the elder brother, but any one not behaving themselves, to take ten goats and go."

As a general rule each widow retains possession of her former shamba and cultivates it on behalf of her family. She has the aid of her daughters till they marry, but as her sons grow up and bring wives, she surrenders part to her daughters in law. Thus if a woman has three sons, the shamba may be divided into four divisions, for the three daughters in law and the mother respectively. This diminution of the size of a woman's plot coincides with the decrease of the claims upon her and of her power to work. Any son buying a second wife would procure an outside shamba. On the mother's death her share falls into hotch pot. In the same way it is usual for a widow to be given the goats which live in her hut, in trust for her children if they are minors. But with regard to both shambas and goats there is a definite power of appointment on the part of a testator, in which personal preference plays a part. A less favoured wife would not be disinherited but might be given a smaller share. According to one hypothetical example, "If a man dies leaving four wives he may say to the principal wife, take fifteen goats to two others, ten, and to the youngest, eight. He does not like the last, for she makes a noise." If the children are grown up the wife receives a small share of livestock say five. In addition to this a portion of the personal property can be "settled," that is to say, that

the testator expressly forbids, on pain of his dying curse, that such or such a female animal shall be killed. It then remains during its life as tied-up capital, and only its descendants can be used. The price for a girl whose father is not living, goes to her brother by the same mother; for the eldest son to appropriate it, if by another wife, would be looked upon as a robbery. There is a curious passage in one of the folk tales ("The Girl who cut the Hair of the N'jenge"),<sup>1</sup> when it would appear as if the mother, or the girl herself, had the option of deciding to which of her own brothers the marli should go.

If, on the other hand, a man dies leaving only *infant children*, his wives and property pass to his brother or brothers, but only to those who are younger than himself; the will of the deceased decides whether they shall all go to one, or to several younger brothers respectively. The idea is presumably that a younger man is better qualified to undertake such serious responsibility than are his seniors. This custom secures that no woman shall be left without a legitimate protector. No man would refuse the obligation, and in the majority of instances the woman apparently falls in with the arrangement. There is, however, no compulsion to take up such matrimonial life, if it is disliked. The widow may return home or live with another man; but, as in the former case, if a child is born it is the property of the late husband's family. According to one statement, where a widow resides independently, the elder brother of her late husband would offer sacrifice for her in case of illness, and share with the younger brother the marli for any girl child who might be born to her. The younger brother, where the children are minors, also take possession, with the wives, of the shambas which they cultivate, and of the goats, but owns it no doubt only in the same conditional manner as is the case when the heir is an adult son. The property is definitely claimed by the family of the deceased as they come

<sup>1</sup> p. 321.

to maturity, the mothers meanwhile keeping a watchful eye over the heritage of their offspring. It is not surprising to hear that there are often protracted lawsuits over the number of goats to be surrendered when the children come of age.

Theoretically, women are said to have no rights of property, unless possibly in the case of extremely old ladies; practically, as has been shown, these are acknowledged. In the case of a man having no children and no relations, his mother and wives could claim the shambas.

An interesting light is thrown on Kikúyu ideas of ownership in the case of an action for trespass, quoted hereafter.<sup>1</sup> The shamba was termed indifferently that of the boy or his mother, and it would no doubt have been equally correct to speak of it as belonging to the mother's legitimate protector.

<sup>1</sup> p 212.

## SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES

### CUSTOMS AT BIRTH

THE customs connected with childbirth are those rather of use than ritual. It is said that six days prior to the confinement the mother feeds on flour and milk only, avoiding meat and vegetables. The child on its birth is washed and oiled all over by the attendants<sup>1</sup>. The father is not present, and does not see the child for a day or two. The hut is placed in seclusion for four days after the birth of a girl, and five days after that of a boy, no one is allowed to enter except the immediate women friends or attendants. The mother, however, may be seen sitting or taking short strolls outside. On the fourth or fifth day respectively, purification takes place and the woman is shaved, but childbirth does not amount to "tha hu" or ceremonial uncleanness, and no Medicine man is called in. The women eat together in the evening. The next day the father kills a sheep, and there is a feast, after which the daily round is resumed. The mother's first visit to the shamba, placed varyingly on the day of the purification or the day of the feast, seems to be somewhat of a function, custom ordaining that she shall gather arum lily roots first and then sweet potatoes. The shaving of the father on the sixth day has been reported, but this is generally denied. The statement may be connected with the regulation shaving after the birth of the second child, which is the sign of his exaltation to the official rank of Mo ran'-ja<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The placenta is carried out into uncultivated land and some grain (u gim bi) strewn on the ground. Grass is cut and placed over this and on the top the placenta is laid—the whole is then covered with more grass and grain strewn around.

<sup>2</sup> p. 197

One Friday, when visiting as usual among the huts, one of them was seen to be closed, and I was told that a birth had just taken place. Returning to the same spot on the following Sunday, I found the woman out walking near the hut, but, for the only time in my experience, permission to enter the house was firmly refused. The baby, however, was brought out for my inspection, a small, pale brown personage, the shade, not of its parents as a whole, but of that of the palms of their hands and soles of their feet. It was unlucky to admire the infant, so I took refuge in inquiries regarding its name, it was a boy, and named M'ganda. On Tuesday, following information received, I again visited the hut about two o'clock in the afternoon, and found two midwives busy outside the hut. They brought water in a gourd, and washed themselves all over with leaves and hands, "as their work was finished." I had some conversation with the elder midwife, and learnt that the fee for a successful birth is one goat. If she resides near, it is given without the skin, if at a distance, that is added. Like many older members of a profession, she viewed with suspicion the effort of its younger recruits. I sat outside and waited while the attendants went in, also a young girl to wait on them, carry water, etc. The function of washing the mother and child was, I was told, in progress. The next performance was a great cleansing of the hut, bunches of leaves tied together, having been taken in for the purpose. An enormous accumulation of refuse was swept out, including many banana skins. The mother finally came out, wetted her head, and had it shaved after the usual manner, leaving the little tuft at the back. Some women have the head entirely shaved after the birth of a first child, leaving the centre piece subsequently to grow again. This depends apparently on custom or family fashion. On the birth of a third child, this tuft is worn smaller. This ended the little drama. I was informed that the midwives would come back

and have food late that evening, and that the husband would go next day and get the sheep for the feast. I endeavoured to arrange to be told when the festival was taking place, but no messenger arrived, and circumstances prevented another visit.

If the child will not take its mother's milk satisfactorily, a sheep is killed at once to bring about the result, instead of waiting for the feast after purification. Dr. Crawford informs me that he was sent for once to a confinement where the woman was dangerously ill, and found that she had been brought outside the hut and placed on a skin on the ground, so strong, apparently, is the feeling against a stranger entering the hut at such a time.

The child is named immediately on birth according to custom. The names given to the successive children of a family are, firstly, those of the father's parents, and then those of the mother's parents according to sex. Subsequent children are named after friends and relations. As this applies to the children of each wife in turn, there are various boys in the homestead all bearing the name of the paternal grandfather, as is seen in the folk story, where we have two sons, each called "M'wam-bi-a."<sup>1</sup> Distinction is made by prefixes such as "big" and "little," and by nicknames.

It is curious and disappointing to find amongst a people where children are valued and loved that infanticide exists to a certain degree. Twins, as among various other races, are considered unlucky. If they are the first-born children they are both killed, or possibly sometimes only the last one. The idea is that they prevent a woman bearing again; if they come later in the family the prejudice does not exist. Triplets are also unlucky, without regard to their position in a family, and one or all are killed. The same applies to an infant born feet first. A child which cuts its upper teeth

<sup>1</sup> p. 315.



first may be killed, or the father may make an offering in its stead, cutting two small pieces of flesh from young sheep, and throwing them away. If a child touches the ground at birth, the father kills a sheep at once, and the midwife comes out and takes the contents of the stomach in her two hands, and while the infant is on the ground anoints its stomach and chest, then takes it up, washes it, and puts the same on its forehead and lips, allows it to remain there, and gives it to its mother. An ill omened child is either suffocated by the mother or is put out in the fallow land, and grass placed in its mouth and nostrils.

A ceremony is reported to take place when a child is very small, which is connected with the acknowledgment of its nationality, and also with the resumption of matrimonial life by the parents. The father kills a sheep one day, and the next puts wristlets on the child, "which becomes an M'kukuyu." The same day, two children, about six years old, are procured, either from the same homestead or another, they do not come into the house, but are given two gourds to go and get water, which they bring to the house. The gourd must be held upright with especial care. The father rewards each child with a leg of the sheep, and they remain that day in the village, for if they walked abroad, and pricked a foot and blood came, it would bring bad luck. All the relations bring food and eat together inside and outside the hut. In some cases the mother gives the child a necklace on the occasion, but this is optional.

The first marked stage in a boy's life is when he is old enough to mind the goats, which is reached when he is perhaps five years old. He then receives, it is said, a present from his father of a sheep, of which he gives to his mother the belly, one leg and the skin to his father the head and the boy and his friends eat the rest.

## THE CEREMONY OF THE SECOND BIRTH

TO BE BORN AGAIN (KO-CHI-A-RŪ-O KE-RI) OR TO BE BORN OF A GOAT  
(KO-CHI-A-RE-I-RŪ-O M'BŪR-I)

The symbolical second birth is perhaps the most mysterious of Kikúyu rites. It is one of the oldest customs, and universal amongst them, prevailing in all their clans. Until an M'kúkúyu is born again he is not capable of assisting in the disposal of his father's body after death, nor of carrying him out into the wilds immediately before decease. The age varies with the ability of the father to provide the necessary goat, but is apparently generally about ten years or younger.<sup>1</sup>

The greatest reluctance was shown in almost every case to talk about the ceremony, and the knowledge of its existence is owed to natives who have freed themselves from tradition and come under the influence of Christianity. No amount of bribery or use of personal influence prevailed to permit either of us to witness it.

My husband suggested being allowed to go through the ceremony himself, but this, it was deemed, would bring immediate death to the individual administering the rite. An apparently genuine attempt was made by one of our native retainers to arrange for its celebration, and to enable me, as a woman, to be present, but this was also a failure. Word was brought back, "It was not the custom for strangers to take part." It is

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above Mr McGregor has, in answer to questions, kindly supplied the following information on the subject —

Girls go through the rite of second birth as well as boys. It is sometimes administered to infants. At one time the new birth was combined with circumcision, and so the ceremony admitted to the privileges and religious rites of the tribe. Afterwards trouble took place on account of mere boys wishing to take their place alongside of the young men and maintaining they were justified in doing so. The old men then settled the matter by separating the two. Unless the new birth has been administered the individual is not in a position to be admitted to circumcision, which is the outward sign of admittance to the nation. Any who have not gone through the rite cannot inherit property, nor take any part in the religious rites of the country.

not possible, therefore, to do more than copy the notes derived from two different sources. It will be observed that the shaving of the mother, the sweeping out of the hut, and a formal visit to the shamba all form part of the ceremonies as at a real birth.

The account given by a servant of Dr Crawford, an M'likúyu from the Nairobi district, was as follows —

"A day is appointed, any time of year, by father and mother. If the father is dead another elder is called in to act as proxy in his stead, or if the mother is not living another woman to act in her place. Any woman thus acting as representative is looked upon in future by the boy as his own mother. A goat or sheep is killed in the afternoon by any one, usually not by the father, and the stomach and intestines reserved. The ceremony begins in the evening. A piece of skin is cut in a circle, and passed over one shoulder of the candidate and under the other arm. The stomach of the goat is similarly treated and passed over the other shoulder and under the other arm. All the boy's ornaments are removed, but not his clothes. No men are allowed inside the hut, but women are present. The mother sits on a hide on the floor with the boy between her knees. The sheep's gut is passed round the woman and brought in front of the boy. The woman groans as in labour, another woman cuts the gut, and the boy imitates the cry of a new born infant. The women present all applaud, and afterwards the assistant and the mother wash the boy. That night the boy sleeps in the same hut as the mother. On the second day the boy stays with his mother in the homestead. On the third day food is brought, and the relatives and friends come to a feast in the evening, but no native beer is drunk. After all is over the hut is swept out. The boy again sleeps in the mother's hut, and that night the father sleeps in the hut also."

The other account was given us by an M'likúyu from the district of Munge.

“When a child is old enough to mind the goats, a goat is killed; the child sits in front of the mother on the ground. An old woman ties the string of the goat behind the mother and cuts it in front of the child. It is folded up in grass and put outside the hut. The women go inside, but no man, not even the father. The mother wears clothes, but the child is stripped naked, even of its ornaments; it is not dressed up in any way. After this is over both mother and boy are washed. Every one who is old enough to be of intelligence eats the goat.

“On the second day the skin of the goat is prepared. sugar-cane is cut and brought into the house.

“On the third day the mother shaves, but not the child. They both go into the garden and get arum roots, nothing else.

“On the fourth day native beer is drunk.”

One small boy of about seven years told us that he had not yet been born again, but he would be so in about two years, describing the ceremony much as given above. His father, he said, had given him a bangle when he began to herd the goats; before that he had only a necklace and beads from his mother.

## THE CEREMONIES ON INITIATION INTO THE TRIBE

THE festivals and rites associated with both marriage and death hold but a small place in Kikúyu imagination compared to that greatest of all ceremonies whereby the boy becomes a man and the girl a woman. By the rite of circumcision, with its complicated ritual, each individual passes from the condition of simply being the property of Kikuyu parents to that of a member of the Kikuyu nation, with its accompanying rights, privileges, and obligations.

98, 100 The age at which the young people go through the ceremony varies greatly. It may be delayed for two or three years by the father being unable to make the necessary payments for the presentation of a child, for admission means, directly and indirectly, considerable expense to the family, especially in the case of the eldest or two eldest children. Custom obliges the father to give presents to the official classes, one goat to the N'jáma and two goats to the Kíáma, on availing himself of his right to take his seat amongst Kíáma, thus he can only do as the father of a circumcised child. There are also various presents to be given to those who have taken part in the ceremony. On the other hand, until a girl is formally admitted her father cannot get those thirty sleek goats that he has seen in his mind's eye for many a year being handed over to him on his daughter's marriage.

In the case of one of our own retainers who came to say that he wanted to leave our service in order to begin the course of preliminary dancing that precedes the ceremony, it was impossible to persuade him to put it off, because, as he explained to us, he had already done so once or more, and the elders now told him that if he failed to appear on the approaching occasion

they would not permit him to come up for admission in that district at all.

The age at which a girl is to be initiated is settled at a formal interview between the father and mother and local elders. Very rarely indeed a girl of eighteen or more may be seen with her head covered with the hair of its natural length, instead of being shaved in the special way that is customary.

The explanation given for this is that her health is abnormal, and to permit the hair to grow is considered to have a beneficial effect. Under the circumstances she cannot come up for the rite, and therefore cannot be given in marriage. In the ordinary course boys are initiated when they are fifteen to eighteen, and girls when from ten or twelve to fifteen years of age.

The ceremony is held annually, and seniority amongst men is decided by the date of their initiation; a name is given to each successive celebration, by which those who are admitted that year are differentiated from their predecessors. CI

#### DANCING PRIOR TO INITIATION

Three or four months before the day appointed for the ceremony the boy begins "to dance," i.e., he obtains certain essential accoutrements, dresses, and adorns himself in a peculiar manner, and spends the whole of his time in going about the countryside to the different homesteads, markets, and public assemblies, singing a particular song, rehearsing certain complex steps and figures, and in acquiring by practice the requisite strength to be able to last through the quite exhausting ordeal of the day of the festival.

At first the lads begin by practising certain stereotyped movements of legs, arms, and bodies in little groups of twos and threes, but as they become more expert they gradually band themselves together into larger bodies.

In 1903 as many as seventy young fellows might be met, turned out with punctilious correctness, travelling the countryside together. Since that date the number of candidates "dancing" seems to be less, and both boys and girls seem to be put forward much younger than formerly. Should such be the case, the probable explanation of the superior number and age of the candidates observed at the time quoted is due to the fact that few had been presented at the great annual festival of the preceding years, the country being then in a state of war, and occupied in resisting the advance of the British. The festival is not held if the crops fail very considerably, as such is considered an obvious indication of Divine displeasure.

In order to dance, a boy should be painted in a particular manner, wear a particular dress, and carry certain articles.

The pattern in which he is painted varies considerably, but one characteristic in it will be found to be never wanting, that is, the ornamentation of the limbs and abdomen with an indentated pattern in a white pigment.

Tradition says that this pattern is employed in accordance with Divine command to the great M'kikúyu when he stood in the presence of God on Kénia.

The costume also is not absolutely uniform, but the neophyte generally wears a cape of Colobus monkey, and knee and anklets of the same. A Serval-cat skin is attached to the back of the waist, from which it hangs down to the knee. He is adorned with a strap of cowrie shells across the chest and round the hip, and wears a dancing bell at the knee. He also may wear the dancing belt made of dried grass, to the pendant points of which banana seeds have been attached by lumps of dried gum.

109. His head is shaved, with the exception of one tuft on the centre of the crown, and painted like the body. He carries a staff and small wooden shield, adorned on the inside and outside with various devices.



A. R. phot

BOYS IN FULL AND CORRECT COSTUME FOR DANCING PRIOR  
TO BEING INITIATED AS MEN

Shows —

- 1 The shaven head
- 2 " expanded ear lobes
- 3 " dancing shields (Pls lxxxii et seq)
- 4 " cowrie shell strap across the chest
- 5 " monkey tail dependent from elbow
- 6 " serval-cat skin garment (Pl cxiv Fig 2)
- 7 " ceremonial wooden sword (Pl cx Fig 2)
- 8 " dancing rattle on thigh (Pl cxv Fig 1)
- 9 " knee and ankle ornaments of monkey fur
- 10 " zigzag ornamentation of the body
- 11 " long dancing staves



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K R phot

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TO BEING INITIATED AS MEN

Shows —

1. The shaven head.
2. " expanded ear-lobes
3. " dancing shields (Pls lxxvii *et seq.*).
4. " cowrie-shell strap across the chest.
5. " monkey tail dependent from elbow.
6. " serval-cat skin garment (Pl. cxiv, Fig. 2).
7. " ceremonial wooden sword (Pl. cv, Fig. 2)
8. " dancing rattle on thigh (Pl. cxv, Fig. 1).
9. " knee and ankle ornaments of monkey fur.
10. " zigzag ornamentation of the body.
11. " long dancing staves

## PLATE CV

### CLEREMONIAL WEAPONS

These two articles are carried by candidates for admission to circumcision during the period in which they go about the country dancing prior to the great ceremony Cf Pls CVI and CVII They have not been observed in use by the writer on any other occasion

1 A peculiar form of hard wood bludgeon

Length,  $30\frac{1}{2}$  in Max circumf of head,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in

*Carved from the solid*

2 A sharpened hard wood bludgeon, or sword, of special interest Cut out of the solid

At 5 in from the small extremity the circumference is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in, at 10 in,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in, at 15 in,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in

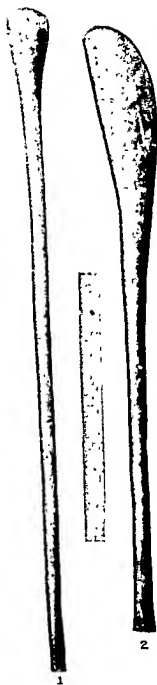
At that point the rounded handle gradually assumes a flattened form, and attains by degrees a maximum circumference of  $5\frac{5}{8}$  in, with a transverse diameter of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in

At point *b* the rounded handle has developed into a blunt comb

Between *b* and *c* this comb becomes more and more sharp From *c* to *d* the border may be described as a comparatively sharp cutting edge From *d* to *e* this edge gradually becomes more and more blunt, and so merges again into the rounded handle

The balance and feel of the weapon, when grasped in the neighbourhood of *a*, is very similar to that of the fighting sword in everyday use When picked up this wooden sword automatically falls into position, with the cutting edge (*d*) directed downwards It is a cleverly designed and efficient weapon

These two articles are made by an expert who lives between Kiruris and Mun'gas They have a highly finished surface, which is given by a leaf that forms a natural glass paper



1

2

*Brit. Mus. (R.)*

156c

PL. CVIA



*K h ph t*



W S I phot



H S R phot

FIGURES IN THE PECULIAR DANCE WITH SONG OF THE NIOBHETES  
PRIOR TO INITIATION AS MEN



*H S R phot*



*W S R phot*

FIGURES IN THE PECULIAR DANCE WITH SONG OF THE NEOPHYTES  
PRIOR TO INITIATION AS MEN



ANOTHER COSTUME OF A  
NEOPHYTE AS HE DANCES  
IRIOI TO INITIATION TO  
MANHOOD

- 1 The shaved head
- 2 The fillet of fur  
around forehead
- 3 The dancing shield
- 4 The collar of fur  
reaching below  
wrist
- 5 The monkey tail  
dependent from  
elbow
- 6 The painted decora-  
tion of limbs and  
body
- 7 The thigh rattle—  
manner of wear
- 8 The knee and ankle  
ornaments of fur
- 9 The long dancing  
staff



An important part of the preparation for initiation is the dilation of the lobe of the ear. Five months before the rite is to be performed the ear is pierced, and gradually dilated till at the time of the rite, when the period for dancing is completed, it will accommodate a cylinder, as shown on page 32.

The ceremony itself is held in April or May, that is after the grain has been sown, and before it is ready to be gathered, the era when least labour is required in the fields. During the few weeks at this time of year, similar functions are held in different districts all over the countryside. This arrangement brings the festival in the middle of the wet season, but the rains are very intermittent, and the three festivals which we have attended have been favoured with perfect weather.<sup>1</sup>

A short time before the actual date selected a gathering of friends is held at the father's house, and they are formally notified by him that in so many days, say four, his son will be admitted to the tribe.

#### DAY BEFORE THE GREAT DANCE

On the day before the great dance takes place, with which the actual ceremonies begin, the mother devotes her energy to protecting her boy from any possible attacks from witchcraft. "Many people," she argues, "are coming to the great festival on the morrow." Her son will be the observed of many observers, and one may do him harm by putting "medicine" in his path, such, for instance as the bone of a dead man. He therefore has recourse to a beneficent practitioner to counteract the charm in advance. From him she obtains the requisite antidote, and manufactures a potion, "ji-ma," in which it is placed. It is then given to the hero of the occasion to drink.

<sup>1</sup> May 18, 1907, May 21, 1907, April 4, 1908. Each function was on a different site, but all in the neighbourhood of Wombagu's.

## THE GREAT DANCE

The Medicine-Man also makes an arch, with sugar cane at the top, in proximity to the dwelling, so that no one shall bring bad medicine to the homestead. The professional fee for these services is to the value of one rupee (1s. 4d.).

### THE GREAT DANCE

The great dance (Mam-bú-ra) begins about noon on the appointed day. It is held on some convenient site, which must be in proximity to a sacred tree. The various paths which approach it are filled for some time before the ceremony begins with an expectant crowd, fathers, mothers, uncles, and cousins gathering up for the great event. Any one passing through the homesteads of the neighbourhood the day previously, will have seen the ladies preparing their ball gowns by adorning them with a coat of grease and red ochre, which greatly adds to the comfort of wearing the leather, and to the initiated eyes gives a well-groomed appearance. The chief of the neighbourhood attends in state with his bodyguard of askaris. The dances at which we have been present varied slightly in detail, but the main features were always the same.

A space is kept for the dance where the ground is favourable. When the management is good this arena, which may be some fifty yards by fifteen, is surrounded by an even and orderly black wall of spectators, perhaps to the number of a thousand. In one instance there were about forty or fifty candidates, some thirty or more boys, and six or ten girls. It is difficult to account for the much larger proportion of boys than girls who always seem to be presented.

Inside the arena the candidates dance, and places of honour are also given to the mothers, who are attired in festival array and adorned with capes of green leaves. It is for them also a red-letter day of existence, more especially if their first-born is to be initiated. Their heads are then for the first

time completely shaved, and they become acknowledged as "mothers in Israel" Their manner of taking part in the performance is to assume a semi squatting attitude by flexing the knees, and whilst remaining thus, alternately flexing and extending the trunk on the thighs, at the same time sounding forth notes of jubilation on the tubes of bamboo which they carry

Girl relations or friends are also in evidence, adorned with wreaths The candidates continue to perform for some time, dancing and singing down the length of the arena. Each sex keeps together

As interest in the main entertainment begins to flag the company break up somewhat, the men and girls forming a circle, dance together to pass the time, and other dances are held by the unmarried girls amongst themselves

The centre of the ceremony then becomes a special tree Over this the boys hurl long staves At one dance they were observed to rush up singly out of the crowd, beat the trunk and be dragged away by an older man

Three or four men climb the tree and break off boughs from which they gather the leaves When the work is finished they descend and hand the bunches of leaves, and also bark ready for making string, to the feminine relations who are waiting at the foot These complete the preparation of the string by mastication Great importance is attached to the leaves and string as an integral part of the ceremony, but we were unable to find that they serve any practical purpose They are held by the sponsor during the actual rite, and are said to be subsequently placed on the bed The whole of this part of the performance is a somewhat lengthy process, which only partially arrests the interest of the crowd As soon, however, as it is ended the candidates form up in a semicircle at the foot of the tree The older men have been meanwhile holding staves of some 6 feet long, with a tuft of Colobus fur at the

## CEREMONIES OF THE TREE

top, and head-dresses of eagle feathers. These are given to the boys, who assume the head-dresses. They are also presented with two sticks about 4 feet long, and the girls with one of the same kind. Each neophyte is given one of the bunches of leaves and pieces of string which have been prepared.

On one occasion the candidates formed in column before the tree, two and two, boys first, and processed singing.

The company now leaves the original site and streams away in two or three different directions, to secure points of vantage at the next theatres of operation, namely, the various homesteads where the children are to reside after the initiation. These may be at distances varying from five to fifteen minutes' walk from the scene of the dancing. Arrived at one of these, an old man and old woman stand with their backs to one of the huts inside the enclosure.\* The candidates form a semi-circle in front. The old man places chalk in the palm of his hand, and with his right thumb marks each boy in turn between the eyes and down the ridge of the nose. He also touches the suprasternal notch and navel, the two big toes, and makes a circle in the palm of the hand by two sweeps with his thumb to the right and to the left. The girls are touched on the cheek by the ear. The old woman follows, and anoints each candidate on the forehead and on crown of head and throat.

The old man then proceeds down the line blowing n'jôhi (native beer) over each, and the old woman does the same. The "mother" on one occasion also anointed the forehead and neck of the young man who was subsequently to take charge of the boys. This may have been a small spontaneous donation, and not part of the celebration. The details of the rite seem to vary slightly, but the anointing in some form of the candidates with "ira" or chalk by the man, and with oil by the woman, took place on each occasion.

During this performance the neophytes sing a ditty, of



*A. A. phot*

THE CEREMONY OF LEAF-GATHERING  
At the festival of initiation to manhood



a

b

c

A. R. 140

## PLATE CMI

### GIRL CANDIDATES AT DANCE PRIOR TO INITIATION

Carrying wands and wearing —

1. Girls' headband. Pl. cii. p. 140 g
2. Bands of cowrie shells and ropes of beads
3. Girdle (Figs *a* and *b*). Pl. c
4. Wrist fringe (Figs *a* and *c*). Pl. xxix p. 36 j
5. Wrist ornament (sirr) Fig. *b*. Pl. ci p. 140 e

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## PLATE CMII [*see over*]

### DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS AT FESTIVAL OF INITIATION

#### DRESS OF BOY CANDIDATES

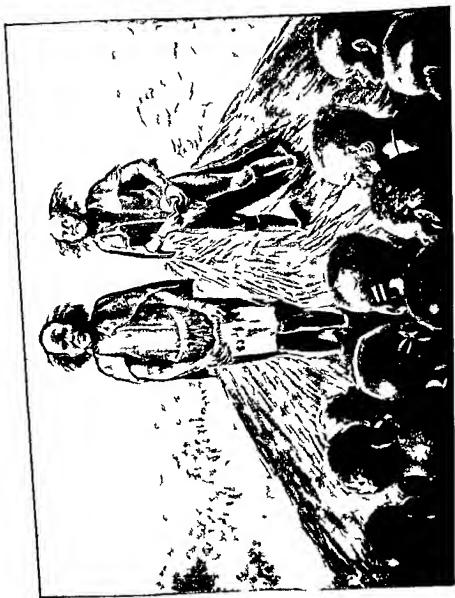
Ostrich-feather headdress borrowed from Masai', and permitted by the old men to be used. It is worn at the dance at the beginning of the day, exchanged for the eagle's feather headdress (shown in Pl. cxiii p. 180 a) for the ceremony before the tree, and resumed for the function at the hut.

The *nguo*, or garment, worn in an unusual manner across the back of both shoulders.

Serial cat skin, worn from wrist. Pl. cxix

Wrist fringe. Pls. xxix, cxi

Anklets of fur of colobus monkey





which the burden is the heroic determination, "when we are cut to-morrow, we will not cry." The boys then take off their head-dresses, and put them on the staves. One<sup>1</sup> of the boys then ascends to the roof of the hut, having resumed the ostrich feather head-dress worn at the beginning of the day. The performer sings and dances, flexing and extending the instep and knee-joint. The arms are held half-raised, and extended laterally with the palms of the hands towards the people below. The fingers are apart, and the wrists flexed in harmony with the song. At intervals the boy dives among the thatch of the roof, and disinters therefrom various objects previously hidden amongst it, which he either retains, or more generally distributes among the crowd. These articles were not precisely the same on any two occasions, indeed there seems to be a certain seeking after novelty in their selection, but, generally speaking, they either refer to the evolution of the boy into the young man, or else take the form of gifts for friends. In this way the sword and club of manhood are successively found and brought out, one of the boys saying, as he brandished a club, "I will beat others now, for I am no longer a friend of 'the children, but of the warriors." In the same manner there may be a distribution of small coins to the young men, "for I shall be a young man to-morrow." To the women and friends generally are thrown gifts of food, such as salt, bananas, and sugar-cane, the ladies meanwhile applauding the quality of the performance, "He does not dance badly; he dances well." In one instance a male doll, roughly modelled in clay, was brought out and exhibited, but no particular sanctity seemed to attach to it. The most curious of these productions witnessed was seen at a dance many miles from the dwelling of any European, at which our presence was accidental. It consisted of a sealed newspaper packet, which, when torn

<sup>1</sup> On one occasion as many as three took part in this way, all being on the roof together.

open by the performer, proved to contain an old number of the *Bystander*. The effect of a savage in a feathered head dress and paint, dancing on the roof of a hut in the middle of nowhere, and displaying this product of modern civilisation, while another, similarly attired, held its wrapper, was, to say the least of it, quaint. The paper had presumably fallen or been abstracted from some mailbag, and been retained for many months. It excited no particular interest and was soon destroyed.

At the conclusion the staves and eagle crowns are handed up and piled on the summit of the roof, being carefully arranged. The performer then makes a sudden leap down, and the small boys amongst the onlookers scatter in a paroxysm of terror. He seizes, however, one luckless youngster, and goes through the form of beating him. It was reported that in old days this victim used to be killed. This completes the day's performance, and with the near approach of sun down the assembled multitude scatter to their respective homes.

#### DAY OF INITIATION

As darkness falls after the great dance, the spectators retire to peace and sleep. It is far otherwise with the boys, who have been worked up to a state of almost hysterical excitement. The girls go to rest in the house of the mother, but the boys continue dancing, and may be heard in the open howling nearly all night long.

The next morning while it is "still dark," according to the description of one of themselves, "the boys come to the homestead, dancing again, and the girls come out and join them. The father says, 'Wait till the birds sing, then I will cut you. Go into the mother's hut and have food.'"

The boys who have danced together in the "Mambura"

divide into two or possibly more parties for the rite of circumcision, which is performed in proximity to the homesteads where they are subsequently to reside. The circumcisor is a specialist—there may be only one man so qualified in a comparatively large district—and he proceeds from one group to the other. It will be remembered that the members of at any rate one clan are not allowed to act in this manner.

While still dark the boys go to bathe, as the ceremony must be completed before sunrise. They go up to their knees in the brook, dipping themselves to the waist, holding up their arms, shaking the wrist with the fingers extended, and keeping up meanwhile the circumcision song.

The warriors superintend to see that the bathing is correct, while the mothers are present attired as the day previously, and bowing and posturing as before. The spectators are kept back from approaching too near to the bank by officials with batons of the stalk of banana. The time in the water is half an hour. The boys are stripped entirely, being even without ornaments, and are completely shaven.

A procession is then reformed to the site selected, which on the occasion seen was a steep hillside facing east. The candidates seat themselves in a row, and are each supported behind by a sponsor, who holds the tied bunch of leaves of the ceremony of the previous day. Opposite are the officials and mothers, with a gangway kept clear for the operators. The general body of spectators stand around. The operation is performed by a knife in two steps. As soon as it is over the sponsor throws his cloak entirely over the boy, concealing at first even his features. They remain seated for some time before retiring to make room for the girls.

The girls bathe in a similar manner, and are also arranged in a row for the subsequent operation, but are held by two sponsors instead of one. The first is seated behind the girl and places the outside of each of her ankles inside those of the

girl to prevent her moving. She is in her turn supported from behind by a second woman. The operation is performed by an old woman, the tool being a razor such as is generally used for shaving the head.<sup>1</sup> Silence is maintained, and neither boys nor girls allow themselves to make any audible sign of emotion.

Immediately after the ordeal is over the children retire to their respective villages where they are to spend the days of their convalescence. For this time various house parties have been made up. A boy who is going through the rite has arranged with so many of his friends to come to his homestead and at this juncture they may be seen sitting about somewhat dolefully. The young men erect for their accommodation a temporary hut termed the "kɪ kan' da". Two young men subsequently take charge of the invalids. The girls forgather in the same way in the hut of one of the respective mothers, and are cared for by the women. The boys state that neither boys nor girls have internal pain nor headache, and that the boys, at any rate, are not prevented from sleeping. No one, they say, ever dies.

#### CONCLUDING CEREMONIES

We were unfortunately unable to remain in the neighbourhood in order to witness the remaining proceedings. The following account is taken from the independent narratives of four of our Kikuyu followers, which agreed in their main features though they varied slightly as to the respective days of the ceremonials. It is probable these may depend on circumstances.

The next day there is a general inspection of the patients to see that they are all doing well. They are encouraged by being told that they will soon be free from pain: the boys in two or three days, the girls in four or five.

<sup>1</sup> The nymphæ and clitoris are removed.

This day, or the day after, sees the further ceremony which ushers in man and womanhood and which is termed Ku-tó-ni-a. It will be remembered that prior to initiation the lobe of the ear has been gradually distended in accordance with the custom of the tribe. This process is now formally endorsed and completed by the tying in the lobe of certain plants.

The function takes place outside the mother's hut in the homestead. Three old men and three old women in all are the celebrants; they are not professionals, but chosen by the children. In each case one of the old men, who must not be the father of the boys, takes the stem of the plant "mu-chú-gu-chú-gu," and ties it loosely in a knot in the lobe of the ear. The stem of a second plant, "mo-i-rí-ki," is then peeled, and its bark put in the lobe of the same ear by one of the old women, the knot being tied in the same way by the old man. The youth is then admonished. "You have now finished being a boy, and are become a man."

Only one ear is done. The process is the same for the girls. The leaves which remain over are put above the door of the hut of the mother of the village.

The day following, that is, the third day after circumcision, the patients remain quiet, sleeping and eating in their homestead.

The fourth day is devoted to shaving of heads ("Ku-en'-ja"). Each boy is thus treated. The work is said to be begun by a little girl, who does a small piece of it, and is to be finished by one of the older women, who must be a relation but not his own mother. The boy is adorned with beads which are the present of some young girl. These are put over one shoulder and under the other arm. While the work is still in progress the boy shakes his head, at which the woman stops and puts on more beads. She continues again, and the same proceeding is repeated. The beads are slept in one night by the mother of the homestead and given back.

The lady barber is entitled to a handsome present, though the work can hardly be other than perfunctory, as the boys are completely shaved at the time they come up for the original rite

The usual beer drinking of all solemn functions naturally finds place during the ceremonies subsequent to circumcision. The women who care for the girls and the young men who look after the boys have a consultation, and when all the boys and girls are free from pain, they go to the father and say that n'johi will be needed, and the next day sugar cane is cut and the drink made, and all the fathers and mothers come and partake. This festival is held about the fourth day.

While the children are in the care of their neighbours, food is brought to them by their mothers, and two sheep are killed, one at the beginning of the time and the other on the fifth day. Convalescence lasts from eight to ten days, on the eighth day the boys can walk a little. At the end of the period the kikan da is taken down and burnt, and the inhabitants go back to their homes. A goat is killed by the boy's family to welcome the returning child. There still remains the "tipping." In addition to the present given to the mother who has done the shaving, the head of the homestead where the boy has been received is given a present of the meat of the goat and some beer and the two young men who have looked after him also receive a present.

Both boys and girls have a further holiday of three months before they return to work.

It is a well known fact that the native races show in childhood intelligence and adaptability which may be said to equal that of their white compeers, but that with earliest manhood and womanhood development seems to cease, or even retrogression to set in. The function of initiation has in some quarters been held responsible for this change. It seems hardly necessary to say that if there is any truth in this, the

reasons must be sought for, not in any physical operation, but in the strain and excitement endured for many months, more especially by the boys, during a critical epoch in life. It is certain that from the white man's point of view, young Kikúyu servants who have been entirely satisfactory till the time that they ask for temporary leave to go through these ceremonies, return, if they return at all, entirely altered for the worse, and are frequently unable again to settle down to the routine of a European establishment.

## DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD

THE method of disposal of the dead is governed by two factors, physical convenience, and superstitious or religious sentiment

In East Africa nature has provided a ready made scavenger in the hyena. *His gruesome office fills the European at first with horror, but he soon realises that it is absolutely speedy, efficient, and wholesome* .

It was our painful lot, on one journey to the railway, to find the road strewn with corpses of natives who had run away from work on the railway line, and had died of starvation before they could reach their homes <sup>1</sup> We had to return a short time after over the same road, and knew no power would have induced the natives to handle the bodies. Nothing was to be seen of the tragedy except one or two untouched garments and a broken water bottle

There are four different methods of dealing with the dead or dying. *Firstly*, a man may die in his hut, and be left there for hyenas to do their work. This only occurs apparently with the very poor and friendless, a man or woman living for instance by themselves, where it is no one's business to dispose of the corpse. If the deceased was a denizen of a homestead there is objection, both natural and religious, to

<sup>1</sup> The matter was reported to the Government and being satisfied in this case that energetic steps were being taken it was left by us in their hands.



visits from an animal which, as explained elsewhere, may <sup>1</sup>defile the common dwelling ground. In such cases the ordinary entrance of the hut, it is said, may be closed, and a new small door made for the entrance of the hyena. One M'hikúyu, however, told us he had never known it done. The practice is therefore probably either restricted to certain localities or is unusual. The object may be to keep the path of the hyena away from other dwellings in the vicinity, or there may be some other and more abstruse explanation. "The Hottentots," according to Dr Tylor, "remove the dead from the hut by an opening broken out on purpose to prevent him from finding the way back" <sup>1</sup>.

*Secondly*, death may occur in the hut, and the body be subsequently taken out and left in uncultivated land. Those who have carried out a body kill a goat, wash their hands in the undigested food, shave their heads, and sleep one night in the woods. They are not allowed to feed with others till purified. The goat is eaten by the elders. So strong is the objection to carrying out a corpse, that as many as seven sheep have to be paid to any man, not a relation, who assists in this manner. A Swahili stated that he had witnessed the gruesome sight of a corpse being dragged out by a string, in order that defilement by touch might be avoided. A woman does not assist in the disposal of the dead, either male or female, except in the case of her own child. A husband will not touch the dead body of his wife, nor a wife that of her husband.

As the handling of the dead is thus both sentimentally undesirable, and also from a practical point of view incurs

<sup>1</sup> See *Prim. Cult.* vol. II p. 26 ed. 1903

great expense, it is not to be wondered at that, as a *third course* of procedure, a person stricken with fatal illness may be taken out into the wilds before decease. This is said to be done with his full consent. If the weather is inclement a shelter is possibly built by friends and a fire made, and some one may remain near till death has actually taken place. If the sick man recovers he is restored to his home.

The traveller not unfrequently comes across a site where a dwelling has obviously once stood, and is told that its former possessor is dead. A hut in which the remains of the owner have been left is never used again, any one entering it would become unclean. It is less clear how living in a house is regarded from which a dead body has been removed, or from which the owner has been taken out to die. Statements are contradictory on this head. It seems probable that while there is objection to taking possession of the particular dwelling of a dead man or woman, where, on the other hand, the hut has been in joint occupation, it is not necessary for the other inhabitants to desert it. This last was definitely stated to be the case where death occurs in the *thin gi ra*, or joint abode of the men.

A hut which is not to be used again may, if it stands at a little distance from the others, be pulled down, and the sticks left, but if it is amidst the others it is set on fire by some old man, who must not be a relation of the deceased, "for fear that the children or goats might go in and take the grass" which will have sprung up through the floor.

The *fourth method* of disposal of the dead, or burial, entails both labour and expense, it is therefore reserved as a mark of honour for a man who is old and rich, and has in the

ordinary course at least two grown-up sons to perform the necessary rites. If a man is very rich he would be buried, even if he had no grown-up children, four old men performing the ceremony. A woman of very advanced age is also entitled to burial, because "she would have much intelligence." It is not "good form" for children to whose parents burial is due to evade the obligation. Information as to procedure was procured from many sources, and was in fair agreement. The succinct account which supplied most details was obtained from a Medicine-Man near Nyeri. The body is watched after death to see no animal approaches, and the old men choose the site of the grave, which is outside the door of the hut. The work of digging it, which is in itself defiling, falls to the sons. A father might possibly assist, but a husband would never do so. The grave is nearly square in shape, only slightly inclining to the oblong. The body is placed on its side, with the knees bent and drawn up. The head rests, if a man, on the palm of the right hand; if a woman, on the palm of the left—or it may be placed on the two hands placed together, palms facing. I have heard a missionary (not from Kikúyu) when speaking in England, seriously instance this recumbent position, "huddled-up attitude," as he termed it, to show the "degradation of the poor heathen." The whole is folded entirely, and tied up in the clothes usually worn, so that not even the head is visible; the oxskin or other bedding of the deceased is either also used for this purpose, or put first in the grave. The ornaments are taken off and put in the grave separately. The head is placed to the west. If the head is to the east the children will die. The hut is pulled down and piled on the top of the grave.

On the day of the interment, the burial being over, the sons take a goat and go to the house of an old man, not necessarily an elder (Kíáma), but one who is poor and has no shamba, and lays himself out for the purpose. They shave their heads, the goat is killed, which the old man eats, and they sleep in his hut. It is also said that the day after the death has occurred is an unlucky day. People will not travel, and goats and sheep will not bear, and all the inhabitants of the village shave their heads. The women will not go out for four days. On the next day the sons who have taken part in the burial do not work. On the third day they shave their heads again, and in the evening get two friends to go down to the stream and get water, in which they wash outside their homestead and the Medicine Man performs the ceremony of purification. They then return to the village and kill another goat, which every one eats. The fourth day native beer is made. The fifth day a drinking festival is held. The sixth day a very big sheep is killed, and all receive a present of the fat. Five days then elapse, after which a male goat is killed as bak-sheesh for the departed father, "who has left many goods behind him," and fat is poured out as an offering to the dead. At the conclusion of the first month yet another male goat is slain, making five members of the flock in all, and the two sons and two Kíama eat a very little (two legs and a part of the stomach), and the rest is put as an offering on the grave. The day after, the two Kíama come into the village and drink beer, and pray for the protection of the village from illness, etc. This ends the funeral rite.

No one can touch the ornaments or cooking pots of a dead person. In the instance already alluded to, a valuable pro-

\* perty, such as a good blanket, was left untouched for months by the highway, a significant evidence of death long after all traces of the deceased owner had disappeared. When we came across the corpses, my husband, in one case, borrowed a cane from one of our followers, and touched the eyelid with it, to see if life was really extinct. When he offered to return the stick it was refused with horror.

## THE DRINKING OF WARM BLOOD

OCCASIONALLY, towards sundown, the picturesque scene may be witnessed of the warriors (A-ná le) drinking blood. A number of these and of the elders assemble outside the cattle ky u go, or strong palisaded enclosure into which the herd is driven every night for protection. The cattle are driven in from pasture to a convenient spot in the neighbourhood of the ky-ú go, but they are not put into it for some reason or other.

Meanwhile, in readiness, a few arrows have been prepared by winding a thong of thin sheepskin, secured by a whipping, round the greater part of the length of their lanceolate iron heads, leaving only the tip exposed. This extremity is  $\frac{1}{2}$  in in length by  $\frac{1}{4}$  in in width, flat, and with a keen cutting border.

A beast is then singled out and seized. a turn of a hide thong is passed round its neck and dragged taut. This causes the flaccid external jugular vein to swell up, in consequence of the blood being no longer able to pass forward to the heart. The beast struggles, seeking to rejoin its herd, everybody talks and shouts and gets in everybody else's way. Each man screams his views, to which no one listens, for every one has himself more than enough to do in keeping his legs in the general scrimmage whilst he vociferates his own ideas. Now and then the group scatters, like a handful of chaff thrown upwards into the air, on the initiative of the beast. Eventually, however, he is secured. the crowd closes in. One of the warriors lays an arrow on his bow and, kneeling about 6 feet away, shoots it at the swollen vein. He seldom succeeds at first in piercing the vessel because of its toughness and resiliency. If, however, he is not pretty speedy, the animal recovers its wind, and, not relishing having half an inch of arrow point constantly

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being stuck into him, again renews his struggles, and everything begins *de novo*. Eventually the arrow does pierce the vein, and the dark blood spurts out in a low jet in consequence of the compression. The difficulty now is to collect it. The animal having by this time probably recovered its breath, will not remain quiet. Amidst "shouts, alarums, and excursions," somehow or other, about a quart is at last collected in a half calabash. Then some one picks up a handful of dust and rubs it over the wound. The cord is eased up and removed, and the frightened beast gallops off to join its friends, routing the crowd in its path. Meanwhile the warriors are all trying to drink the hot blood at the same time—a man only gets a gulp before the dish is dragged from him, whilst probably slopping some of its contents over his face and chest. So it circulates until empty, though not infrequently the whole drinking party is scattered in every direction, and what remains in the bowl wasted by the rush of another party struggling to catch the spurning jet from another struggling beast. Somehow everybody seems to get a mouthful, at least everybody gets smeared with blood, whilst those who have been really lucky and have succeeded in swallowing a lot, often vomit it up. The splendid figures of the nude men beautifully greased, groomed, and ornamented, all smeared with blood—the weapons, the shouts, the movement, the hour, and the stage, make a tableau that is not easily forgotten.

The cattle are said never to be any the worse, notwithstanding the fact that the same beast is many times in its life thus treated. It is essential that the wound be made with an arrow exactly in the manner described. In reply to a suggestion that a knife could be used more effectively, the information was given that such an idea could not be contemplated. The whole proceeding conveys the impression that it is a surviving custom rather than an action of practical utility.

## BLOOD BROTHERHOOD

During one of my visits to the homestead of the chief Munge, he proposed that he and I<sup>1</sup> should enter into the bond of Blood Brotherhood. For various reasons it seemed wise to decline this offer. The following account of the ceremony was given me by him at the time.

A sheep is provided by the stranger, the friends of both parties are present, and custom requires that two elders should take part in the ceremony. The sheep is killed, and the heart taken out and roasted. A slit is made over the end of the sternum and in the forehead at the root of the nose of each of the persons to be united. The blood from each slit is placed by him from whom it has been drawn, into the heart of the sheep. One of the elders cuts the heart in two portions, and each of the contracting parties eats one half. The elders receive one leg of the sheep as their fee, and other persons present eat the sheep.

CEREMONIAL FOR THE RECEPTION OF AN  
M'KIKUYU INTO A FRESH DISTRICT (KUCHI RA' NA)

The next description of a ceremony was also given at Munge's on the occasion of the same visit. The question asked was, What was the correct method of procedure for an M'kikuyu who wished to establish himself in a fresh locality? A hypothetical case was stated.

A man who is dissatisfied with his people and would join another district goes to the leading man there and tells him that he wants to become a member of his people. Each

<sup>1</sup> W. S. R.

<sup>2</sup> For a description of the ceremony of Blood Brotherhood see *An Ivory Trader in North Kenya* (Arkell Hardwick), p. 147. *Rise of our East African Empire* (Lugard) p. 330.



party to the transaction brings a sheep, or, if they are well-off, an ox. The occasion is made a public one, and all those resident in the district which the new-comer is about to enter—men, women, and children—join in the ceremony.

The sheep or oxen are killed, and from the "belly" of each a strip is cut,<sup>1</sup> and also a piece of skin from a leg of each animal.

Blood from each of the two animals is put into one leaf, and the contents of the two bellies into another leaf. The elders (ki-á-ma) slit the two pieces of skin from the leg and the two strips from the belly, and make four wristlets; the two coming from the beast of one party are placed on the right arm of the other party, and vice versa. The elders then take the two leaves containing blood, and both parties to the transaction extend their hands; the elders pour a little blood into all the four palms, and this is passed from the palms of the one person to those of the other. All round are called to see that the blood is mingled, and hear the proclamation that the two are now of one blood.

The mother of the representative of the district then shaves the head of the man to be received, thus treating him as though he were her own child.

On the third day a drinking festival is held

<sup>1</sup> This is probably a piece of skin similar to the oval slip left on the breast-bone of the sheep that I saw killed and flayed in sacrifice. Cf. p. 232.

## DANCING<sup>1</sup>

DANCING enters largely into the life of the Akikúyu. As has been seen, childhood is a time of quiescence; with approaching maturity comes an epoch of restless activity. From that period till early manhood they practise certain elementary movements, which are the basis on which all their dances are constructed. In the case of the men, these movements may be enumerated as follows:—

- 1 Springing from one foot high into the air, whilst running at full speed, without losing stride

- 2 Springing vertically upwards from one foot, from a position of rest, so, too, from both feet

- 3 Flexing sharply the head and neck, as a rigid whole, on the breast and back alternately

- 4 Continuing to dance for hours with the leg half flexed on the thigh, and the thigh half flexed on the body

- 5 Setting up and maintaining for a period of, say, half a minute at a time, a tremor in the muscles surrounding the shoulder-joint. This tremor is required to impart a vibratory movement to special shields attached to the shoulder

The subjoined table of dances is compiled from our own observations, with the help of certain enthusiasts amongst our retainers, who resolved themselves into a small informal committee to check the information given by one another. It can only be considered tentative

<sup>1</sup> Tate "Notes on the Hukuyu Tribe," *Anthropological Journal*, 1904, states—"The following are the names of the dance festivals." Ngakaro (to celebrate death of enemy), Ruhuyu wa ngombe (to celebrate capture of cattle), Trua (festival before circumcision of boys), Usegu (festival before circumcision of girls), Kuehukia, Nguchu, Mugoya (no explanation given). "The dances of the unmarried men and girls are not festivals, but love dances. Muthunguchi, the dance of the Elders and married women, is also of an erotic nature." Nguru, festival of warriors before war. (See also footnote p. 179.)

KIKUTE DANCES<sup>1</sup>*Dances of Uncircumcised Boys—*

- (1) Ke-bo-fa . . . . . A dance by young boys with a special dress, and body as if tattooed.
- (2) N'gou-fa . . . . . A dance by big boys wearing make-cold decorations.
- (3) Mam-bu-ra . . . . . The dance at the great ceremony of initiation.

*Dances of Men only—*

- (1) N'dor-bai . . . . . A festival of youths lately initiated (mufiro), and other young warriors.
- (2) Ki-ba-ta . . . . . A spectacular dance given by warriors.
- (3) A peculiar dance on the corn- . . . . . Special description given.  
pletion of the maize harvest.

*Dances of Men and Women together—*

- (1) Mui-gol-o . . . . . A social dance.
- (2) Ke-chú-ki-a . . . . . The principal social dance. This dance is always started by the warriors and young women at any large gathering.
- (3) Ke-o-na-no . . . . . No notes available about this dance.
- (4) Ku-i-ne-né-ra . . . . . A social dance. The men form the outside ring; the girls inside by themselves in groups.

*Dances of Women only—*

- (1) Ge-ti-ro . . . . . Dance of elder women at betrothal of a daughter.
- (2) N'dú-mo . . . . . No detailed notes on this dance.

## DANCES OF UNCIRCUMCISED BOYS

There are special dances for young boys, namely, the ke-bo-fa and the n'goi-fa. The great circumcision dance known as the Mambúra, with its preceding months of practice, has been already described.

<sup>1</sup> The following are the dances enumerated under the heading "Dances" in Hinde's *Vocabulary*: "Muthun ganchi (elders), nguahu (children), kishukia (warriors), nduamo (young women), kituro (old women), reegu (uncircumcised boys)"

## DANCES OF MEN ONLY

The young men have a special festival of their own which is named N'do ró si, to which no one is admitted till after initiation. It takes place when the autumn crop of mwé-li is about a foot high. Rough huts are built in the uncultivated land and the festival lasts from six to twelve days. As many as two hundred boys may thus assemble. Contributions are brought according to the wealth of the neighbourhood, there may be a sheep between every two persons, or, in a poor district, only one between fifteen. A man of position would supply an ox. Some of the participants go home to sleep, others stay and guard the meat. Dancing takes place on the third and sixth days.

The first Kikuyu dance that I<sup>1</sup> had the honour of being invited to assist at (Wom bú gu's, 1903) was of the nature of a theatrical representation or spectacular review of the troops. The whole countryside assembled. The stage was a turf clad saddle betwixt two hilltops, 80 yds wide by 250 yds long, surrounded in parts with a remnant of the primitive forest. The warriors about to perform mustered in the valley far below. The men and boys occupied the two ends of the dancing ground, the women the two sides.

When I first took up my position, five very old and influential men were sitting around a small fire in the centre of the green. By the side of it was a young tree, some 10 ft high, artificially planted. On the ground was an armful of the foliage of some special bush, with small quantities of this greenery the fire was from time to time replenished so as to maintain a continuous smoke. Presently one of the old men rose from the fire, and coming to me invited me to join them. The circle opened sufficiently to receive me, sitting on my heels. The senior then spat into his right palm and extended it to me,

<sup>1</sup> W. S. R.



*It is given to Author by the late C. H. Veltz.*

# A PECULIAR DANCE PERFORMED BY BOYS

## PLATE CIV

### CARMENTS WORN WHEN DANCING

1 A peculiar garment worn from the waist so as to fall over the buttocks. The warriors taking part in certain dances must wear it. (It is part of the fighting costume amongst the *Marra*.) The young men in Pl *civ*, p. 180 a, are all wearing it, for which there is some special reason (unknown).

2 Skin of *seru-lu-lu* (*nga'-lu*) is worn from the waist (Pl *civ*, p. 156 a) by boys when dancing prior to initiation. The neck is folded back and cut to the same shape as Fig. 1. The forelegs pass around the wearer's waist to cross in front. Cf. Pl *civ*, p. 156 c.

## PLATE CV

### A RATTLE AND TWO BELLS

1 *Thigh Bell or Rattle* worn in certain dances on the outer side of the thigh just above the knee. (Cf. Pl *civ*, p. 156 b.)

a The rattle. Iron bullets roll up and down its interior.

b Leather shield to maintain it (a) in place, and to protect the skin of the knee. The strap c passes through b, then through hole in a, thence back through another hole in a, through another hole in b, and thence around the limb, in order that its two extremities may be fastened together.

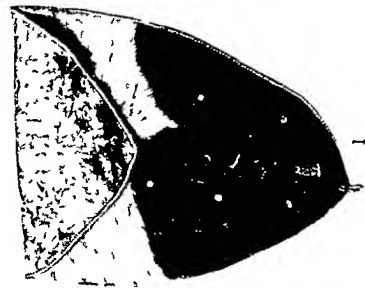
c Wide strap passing up outer side of thigh to carry the weight of the rattle.

d is stitched to the top of c and encircles the upper part of the thigh.

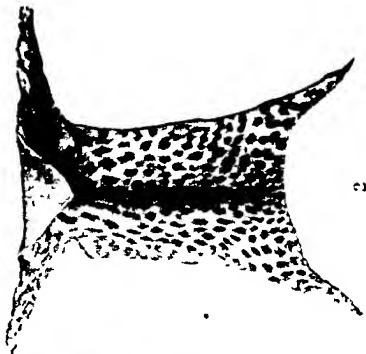
e encircles the thigh just above the knee.

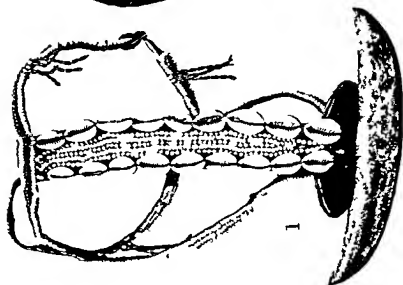
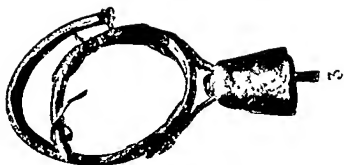
*Goat Bell* of iron, with iron clapper. Leather collar has been cut through to remove in haste from goats seized in war.

3 *Goat Bell* of wood with wooden clapper. Leather collar similarly cut through.



1 Ro c







saying, "Peace" I spat in mine and accepted the proffered hand, with the reply, "Very much Peace" He then spat into his again, and again extended it, with the words, "Very much Peace indeed" And so all round I was then given a few sprays of the greenery and told to make smoke, and when I had done so, received and ate a morsel of banana drawn from the ashes, as did each of the others After twenty minutes or so I was told I ought to leave, as the performance was about to begin The making of smoke in this way and from this plant, was, I afterwards gathered, in some way associated with the existence or the maintenance of peace, and my invitation by the elders as an equal, a most extraordinary compliment and mark of good will

The performance began at 2 30 p m At that hour a lad suddenly burst, shrieking, through the crowd, and tore down the length of ground, crying out that a Masai raiding party were on them, and were sweeping off the cattle, etc He then disappeared for good After due pause, to allow this appalling news to go home, a young warrior appeared in a lather of sweat and in an exhausted state, who reported to the audience what he had seen when scouting As he finished speaking, far down in the valley below was faintly heard the war song, which rapidly gained in volume of sound as the warriors mounted the winding path They soon appeared from amongst the trees as a long single file, faultlessly accoutred and moving in a conventionally stealthy way Each man kept perfect distance and step and made exactly the same complicated gestures as his fellow The whole body first made its way towards Wombugu and myself, and the commander in chief at their head confidentially, as it were, informed my host that there was not the least real need for anxiety, as he well knew what the speaker and his men were worth as warriors He then gradually moved along the wall of spectators and endeavoured to allay their anxiety In support of what he

.

said he directed endless marchings and counter marchings, which were carried out with complicated steps and gestures all over the field of action

Finally the General Officer Commanding left the arena unobserved and took up a position behind the spectators at one end of the ground, in fact just behind us. Suddenly, at his shout the wall of spectators broke and separated on his either hand and down the slope he came like a whirlwind, a magnificent specimen of savage manhood, with his shield half raised and his spear poised, each of which he slightly raised still more as he sprang with a yell into the air at intervals of about 30 yards, by means of the peculiar trick previously mentioned of jumping vertically upwards from one apparently stiffened leg. Numbers of the warriors thus independently burst into the arena and were received by the women with rounds of applause, which varied considerably in degree according to the popularity of the individual. Applause was given by the women throwing one leg forward and then inclining from the waist, whilst at the same time they feigned as it were to throw their handkerchiefs, in the form of a bouquet of leaves to the favoured individual. As this action is done rhythmically by all, whilst at the same time they utter a compliment the effect, as one looks down the encompassing wall of spectators is most pleasing. When a woman has made her complimentary remarks anent the individual she joins her fellows in uttering the peculiar cry of lu lu lu lu lu lu, rendered as a descending scale, which has a liquid sound like water gurgling from a calabash. It much resembles the note of one of the native birds that greets the traveller in all directions in the freshness of the dawn in this part of Africa. Thus the dance ended having lasted about an hour and a half.

Very similar to the foregoing was a spectacular dance (lu bá ta) held at Mun gé s (October 1907). On our arrival a few old men and boys were sitting on their heels in the

shade of isolated trees that had been left standing when the ground was cleared. Little parties of women, with their babies astride their loins, gradually appeared, walking down the course preceded by a vanguard of children, many of these similarly carrying brothers and sisters even smaller than themselves. Warriors, irreproachable in form, dress, and equipment, gravely strode by, to take up a position apart. Bervies of girls chattered and laughed as they made towards their women friends. All were in festival dress, which means that none, however poor, were unadorned. For this occasion everybody appeared to have managed to afford the luxury of a coat of sheep's tail grease, or at least a rub down of castor-oil. Their brown black skins thus groomed have the sheen of velvet. The dance was a formal one. none took part in it except those warriors who had undertaken to give the performance. They were all very similarly adorned with red and white paint, and wore a waistbelt from which depended a fringe of fine iron chain. They carried bows, clubs, and swords, while large iron rattles, attached above the knee, emphasised every movement.

The course was cleared, and the performance began by two of the performers running at full speed down its length, whilst at the same time they leaped high in the air every few yards. As they came by they were greeted by the crowd of women in the usual way. These were the messengers to announce the approach of the dancers, who now appeared at the bottom of the green to the number of about eighteen. Their trainer preceded them, walking backwards. He emphasised the time and generally gave directions, and alone was not specially decorated but his status was indicated by his legs being whitened from the knee to the ankle. This small body of dancers went round the green spinning their spears and swinging their clubs from the wrist in perfect time, to a sort of grunting accompaniment, as required by the

particular step They then retired to form part of the grand procession which now appeared

With the master of ceremonies walking backwards at their head, and to the inspiring booming of the war horn, which constantly moved about them, the whole body of dancers, now about seventy five in number, came forward in ranks of five abreast From the flat of one foot they spring to the flat of the other, all the while remaining in a crouching attitude Their bodies simultaneously sway forward the next moment the elbows are thrown vigorously backwards at the same time the head is violently jerked back, and the face thrown upwards This has the effect of making the back hair stream behind horizontally, while the front hair stands on end For the hair really consists of a series of weighted cords, as explained above The muscular exertion is excessive, and the dancers stream with sweat, hence constant adjournments have to be made to the dressing room at the end of the green for renovations

There was no vocal accompaniment or any instrumental music beyond the war horn The men and boys did not applaud—only the women The dance consisted of various wheelings and evolutions of a drill like character carried out in a conventional manner There was nothing in it of the nature of a story portrayed in pantomime The audience numbered about six or seven hundred persons, who behaved in the most orderly way, never encroaching on the course When carried away by their feelings in applauding some special favourite, the ladies, indeed, were occasionally guilty of unduly pressing forward, but immediately yielded to the admonitions of an individual with a long white wand

The proceedings, though to a European monotonous, seemed to keep their hold on the interest of the spectators, and when the evolution was occasionally slovenly performed, the chief left his place to explain and to demonstrate how it

ought to have been done. There was no feasting or merry-making, and by 4 p.m. all were wending their way back to their home amongst the hills around.

### DANCES OF MEN AND WOMEN TOGETHER

Mixed dances are constantly held, and are very popular.

The most picturesque of these entertainments are those which are held every night when the moon is full. Of these we attended several.

The following is an account of one to which we found our way one evening about nine o'clock. We wound along a hill-side in the deep shadow thrown by a sacred grove till we emerged at an open space where the African moon poured her flood of light, and the people, their day's work in the fields finished, were assembled to dance. Small fires had been lighted around the green for warmth by the ancients and children, while in the centre was a blazing bonfire. The director of the dance, torch in hand, marshalled the dancers. He was one of the leading warriors, his head elaborately decorated and adorned with a mass of vulture plumes, and at his side his sword in its scarlet goatskin scabbard. Four others assisted him. The dancers took up their places, forming a complete ring round the fire. The men stood with their backs to it; the girls faced them, placing their hands on the men's shoulders. The man then put his arms round his partner's waist, and held behind her with both hands his long wooden dancing spear, the butt of it being driven firmly into the ground at her heels; this was to prevent her moving backwards. There they stood in perfect silence, their well-oiled bodies gleaming in the firelight. One of the warriors then began by singing a verse to a well-known air about himself or another, or a subject of common interest. In the present case it was: "My name is Wa-má-hu; once I was a boy and minded the goats, now I am a man and eat bananas."

Whereupon the circle of dancers replied, "Oh yes, oh yes! Once he was a boy and munded goats, now he is a man and eats bananas," at the same time emphasising this statement by clasping one another rhythmically, the great circle of dancers swaying from the waist in perfect time either backwards and forwards or from side to side. No talking was allowed. Any transgressing couple were immediately corrected by a clout over the head with a burning torch administered by one of the deputy masters of ceremony. The principal duty of these officials was, however, to support their chief in giving pantomimic expression to the statement made by the singers of the moment. Thus they moved about within the ring with elaborate step and posture, their every movement displayed by the fierce fire-light. In the semi darkness outside the ring some chaperons watched their daughters, with a few children as yet too young to take part.

After a while the form of the dance changed,—the men gradually moved aside till the ring was formed of men only in one part, and girls only in the other, everybody facing inwards to the fire. The song continued as before, but the measure changed, all in the ring assumed a semi squatting attitude, and marked the time by throwing the head to and fro, jerking the bent arms violently backwards and forwards, and swaying the body from the waist. This movement so wrought upon the feelings of all that the chaperons and youngsters sprang up from their little fires, joined in the song, and assumed the same crouching attitude and movements. When everybody was thus wild with excitement the master of the dance and his assistants ceasing their posturing, gravely moved forward one by one, and taking certain favoured warriors by the hand, and lead them with stately step around the fire and out of the ring. Each individual as he moved by being greeted with the plaudits of all, the women uttering their sweet treble lu lu lu in sequence, so that a wave of sound

rippled down their line and back again, whilst the men kept up a steady deep grunting that formed an effective bass to it. The dance then broke up, for it was past midnight. The dancers returned home in small parties in high good humour, singing as they went.

Some of the girls at one such dance wished to sit out, pleading that they had been working in the fields all day, and were too tired for further exertion. The master of ceremonies declined to accept the excuse, and good-humouredly but firmly they were clubbed into taking part.

Another form of mixed dance is for a circle to be made with the girls within and the men outside, facing one another. The men put their hands on the women's hips, and the women on the men's shoulders, they sway laterally, resting on alternate feet, jump three times vertically, then one jump laterally. The whole circle of, say, some fifty people, rotates accordingly.

In one dance seen, which took place at sunrise, the girls as they arrived took their places inside the circle, selecting as their partner the man with whom they wished to dance. The young people of a district arrange thus for constant meetings, different sites being selected for the dances in various parts of the country-side.

A man takes part in such entertainments as long as he has only one child, but a woman ceases altogether as soon as she marries. The idea that she should even want to do so seemed inconceivable. "If," we were told in answer to our inquiries "she made a fuss, her husband would be very angry, and tell her to go back to her own home. He would say, 'I have bought you, and you want to go to dances!'"

#### WOMEN'S DANCES

The dances in which a woman can take part subsequent to her marriage are the women's dances, one such, as has been

seen, is performed by the mother and her friends on the marriage of a daughter

If a large number of women have been engaged for the day in any common occupation such as bringing in reeds they generally celebrate its completion by a song and dance. The leader of the ballet is invariably the oldest woman present, who with other ladies of mature years occupies the centre of a hollow square (Cf Pl cxvi)

The dance consists alternately of posturing by the ancient *première danseuse* in the centre, who sings a solo meanwhile, and of rhythmic steps and chorus by the other women who form the side of the square

#### PECULIAR DANCE ON COMPLETION OF THE MAIZE HARVEST

On one occasion I was fortunate enough to witness this dance. It was soon after my arrival in the country. How far it is a religious ceremony I cannot say, but the image was apparently neither held sacred itself nor considered to represent anything which was so held.

The following account is reprinted from *Man* (Jan 1906), the journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute —

In 1903 I was living in the country of the Akikuyu, in the district of the petty chieftain Wombugu, whose village is situated on the River Gu ra midway between the points now indicated on the map as Fort Hall and Fort Nyeri, in the province of Kenya in British East Africa.

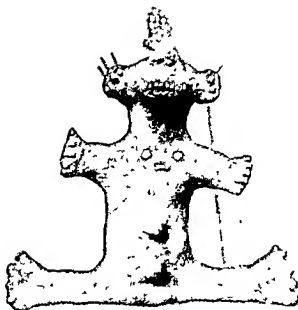
Coming one day suddenly over the sky line of what proved to be a sort of huge natural amphitheatre, I saw at the bottom a large number, perhaps 500 of people—say 300 men and the rest women and children. The women and children dressed in the usual way, stood around as spectators availing themselves of the natural rise of the ground the better to see, but they took no active part whatsoever in the ceremony.





W. S. R. phot.

IMPROMPTU DANCE BY WOMEN



*H & R phot*

*A MALE IMAGE*

Similar to the female one seen at the ceremony described and modelled by the same artist a few days afterwards.



*W S R phot*

THE SAME IMAGE, SIDE VIEW

Note the flat forehead, the long neck, the prominent umbilicus.



IV S R phot

#### PECULIAR DANCE BEFORE AN IMAGE

A group of dancers taken to show the manner of their decoration with the dried sheaths of the maize cob

The dancing shield of the initiation rites (cf Pl. CIX p. 156 h) is here represented by an arched frame attached to the upper arm. To this frame bunches of dried sheaths are attached. The monkey fur ornaments of the calf and ankle (cf Pl. CIX p. 156 h) are replaced by similar ornaments made of the whitish yellow sheaths. The photo was taken somewhat late, by which time the shoulder frames had lost most of their decoration of dried sheaths.

The men were specially dressed for the occasion, and formed up as a compact body in the arena.

The elements of the men's dress were the same as in everyday life, plus a special form of shoulder wing. The material of their dress was exclusively the dry, whitish-yellow, fibrous sheath that forms the outer covering of a cob of ripe maize, instead of being the fur of the Colobus monkey, as is customary.

The costume consisted of—

(1) A garland formed by a hoop, to which was attached about thirty maize sheaths, standing out from the head like the rays of a star.

(2) A shoulder wing or frame-projecting upwards above the head about 9 in., and consisting of an armlet passing round the arm as high up as possible, from which sprang a light cane ovoid hoop with its circumference directed forwards and backwards, to the periphery of which was attached tufts of the dry maize sheaths.

(By constant informal practice an M'kikúyu can impart from the muscles of the shoulder a peculiar quivering movement to these shoulder dancing shields that much resembles the action of the wings of a young bird when anticipating food from the parent, and the effect of such, in the case of a large number of dancers, is most effective.)

(3) An armlet worn just above the elbow, from which depended a bunch of maize sheath—the equivalent of the white bushy tail of the Colobus monkey (gú-u) usually worn at the Mambúra dance.

(4) A circlet placed just above the curve of the calf of the leg, formed of cane, of which the ends, extending about six inches backwards, allowed the maize sheaths to be arranged like the long white back-hair of the Colobus.

In their hands they carried, instead of the usual life-preserver (n'jò gú-na), a stick about two feet long, to the extremity of which a large tuft of maize sheath was attached.

A small group of elders stood facing the crowd, and one of their number addressed it. The assembled performers then went through certain complicated Sir Roger de Coverley-like movements in a series of short jumping steps, and finally ranged up in front of the elders. (This particular jumping step is practised at odd times.)

One of the old men then very carefully unwrapped a sundried clay image from its covering of green banana leaves, and, supporting it on his extended palms, held at the level of his face, proceeded to dance it up and down.

Immediately on his so doing the crowd seemed to go wild with excitement, apparently applauding and at the same time going through the set steps in perfect time, but more vigorously than ever, and without moving from the spot where each man stood.

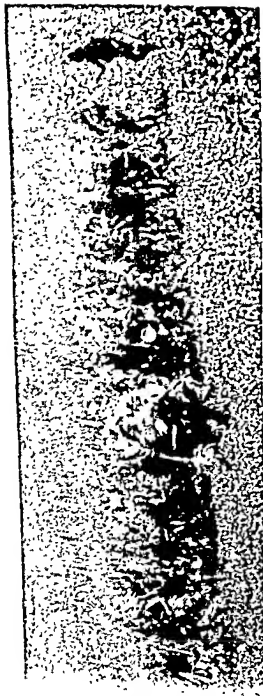
The image was thus elevated for adoration three or four times, and then carefully wrapped up and put away.

The whole party then departed to go through the same ceremony elsewhere, so they told me. The proceedings took about half an hour.

Some time previously, when talking with the Akikúyu, I had made very precise inquiries as to what constituted good looks in a man and a woman; and it was then impressed upon me by them that perfect beauty required a low forehead, a long neck, and a pronounced umbilicus (slight umbilical hernia). I was much struck, therefore, by the way in which the figure conformed to the canons of beauty thus previously laid down.

The Akikúyu always referred to the figure as "the little one," and explained to me that whosoever saw it must needs dance—he danced involuntarily.

These images are sometimes male and sometimes female. The one I first saw and subsequently acquired was a female, the sex being indicated by the small triangular apron which custom amongst the Akikúyu requires even the youngest



ON THE ELEVATION OF THE IMAGE "THE CROWD SEEMED TO GO WILD WITH EXCITEMENT" (p. 190)

female child always to wear, but the breasts were quite unindicated beyond being marked by a couple of blue beads. It seemed to me at the time that the figure was not intended specially to express the idea of femininity or motherhood, a view that was proved afterwards to be correct by similar male figures being brought to me.

Being well known to everybody present, either personally or by repute, I had no difficulty in being allowed to be present or even in taking photographs, but though I expressed the Pl. c.  
190 greatest interest and devotion, and made handsome presents to the image, it was somehow so arranged that in the two whole years I was amongst them I never saw the ceremony again repeated.

My friends explained to me that there was nothing sacred in the image itself, but that no one would think of treating it with disrespect, and that it was kept buried in the store of pounded m'wé-li flour to protect it from injury.

This festival takes place immediately after the in-gathering of the crops, i.e. biennially.

It is a rather remarkable fact that two Government punitive expeditions raided this district subsequently, but never found one of these images, for, had one been found, it would certainly have been brought in by the black troops, who quite know the value of curios.



## GAMES

THE boys have a game amongst themselves that takes the form of a series of questions or statements, each of which has to be replied to or parried by a correlated question or statement. One lad begins by propounding a question —

*Question* What did you eat yesterday, little N'dorobo?

*Answer* Ou thi (scraps of food) and went to sleep

*Q* Did you snatch up your food like a hawk?

*A* Like a hawk that has lost his tail

Question and answer have to be given instantly, and each is learnt by heart previously, and is not due to unprompted wit. Two boys recite in this way as fast as they can jabber. The game probably depends on plays upon words as it always excites interest and smiles.

The Akikuyu also possess their share of the riddles which are associated with savages or with our own child life. They are known as "Guso," or "Do you hear." Such are the following —

*Q* What hangs down? *A* Bananas — *Q* Why do I hear a noise? *A* The birds are in the shamba — *Q* What takes a winding course? *A* An N'dorobo on the road — *Q* The young men go the old men stay? *A* The ashes are poured out the hearth stones remain — *Q* What goes from hill to hill? *A* The foot

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## POLITICAL LIFE

## POLITICAL ORGANISATION

THE willing and intelligent M'kikúyu, endeavouring to make clear to an Englishman the working of his tribal rule, finds himself in much the same position as an agricultural labourer at home trying to explain to a foreigner the ways of Local Government. He has a very good working idea, but to put himself in the place of any one so entirely ignorant as his questioner, is beyond his conception of what is reasonable. Relevant matter is forgotten, irrelevant is introduced, names and terms become confused. It was ascertained also, only after much agonised striving to make versions fit, that though leading principles are the same throughout the tribe, the details, and to a certain extent the nomenclature, vary in different districts. Another difficulty, and perhaps the greatest of all, lies in the fact that though only some six years have elapsed since the English conquest, the new order has already laid its hand on the old. Young men are growing up unacquainted with the old régime; old men are apt unduly to glorify their own dignity in the past. The student looks sadly at the pages of his notebook, filled with information seriously given, about the power and position of the chief, when he realises that chieftainship itself in its present form is an English creation.

The reader of English history is taught that the strength of the Saxons lay in local government; also, that they fell before the Normans because they lacked cohesion.

Kikúyu polity is local government run mad. The unit

of all life is, as has already been explained, the homestead, the dwelling-place of the family

For *military purposes* a number, varying it is stated from two to perhaps ten of these homesteads, would, prior to the British occupation, unite under a leader or headman. No man would serve under any other leader, and usually declined to obey his own. The traveller is still a victim to this form of organisation. A body of natives engaged turn up with their own appointed headman. If subsequent porters are needed these also will have their own head, and decline to acknowledge the first. As these leaders will do no work, generally fail to keep order, and expect double pay and rations, the white man may have his own views on the subject of their indefinite multiplication.

Geographical boundaries in an undulating country, or possibly the local distribution of population consequent on the first settlement of new land, suggested even to the Akikúyu some further combination. Vague districts or larger groups of homesteads existed whose inhabitants would, it might be expected, be also united by a blood tie. As a matter of fact, however, the various clans do not seem to be associated with particular localities, and such bonds would always be limited by the rules of the clans as to intermarriage. The number of headmen in each district of course varied. One district was quoted as having perhaps ten of such leaders, others might have only five, or as many as twenty or thirty. These neighbouring headmen acted, on occasion at any rate, after some fashion in concert, and the influence of one of their number appears to have predominated. The great bond of union was, however, the advice of one Medicine Man. A council would be held, a sheep killed, and lots cast to decide the propitious manner of attack. The Medicine-Man bestowed a charm to be worn by the headman, but himself judiciously stayed at home. Even these districts, or political areas,

if they deserve so definite a name, were generally limited in the extreme; one valley engaged in warfare with another, the people in the valley fought those on the hillside, a small stream separated friends from foes. Several districts might occasionally unite under one Medicine-Man against an enemy such as the Masai, but no great conqueror ever seems to have arisen to weld the tribe into one people. Even in the present days of comparative centralisation there are, according to a list compiled by Mr. McGregor, at least one hundred and two chiefs in the land.

For all *civil purposes* of government the head of the homestead is *ipso facto* a ruler. There is no council of the nation, the regions concerned are too small for the question of representation to arise; the government is patriarchal, or, as far as it arises to the dignity of a state, in the hands of the councils of old men. These meet, confer, and act in varying numbers according to the interest or exigencies of the case. The tendency for one man in such assemblies to attain to pre-eminence will be considered hereafter.

#### OFFICIAL RANKS<sup>1</sup>

The degrees by which the official dignity of old age are reached, depend not on the years of the individual, of which it is obviously impossible that account should have been kept, but on the relation in which he stands to the rising generation.

The first official rank is reached when a man becomes the father of a second child. He then enters the class of the *Mo-ran'-ia*, and gives a goat to the members of the grade to celebrate the occasion; in some districts this last ceremony is optional. He is supposed to shave his head, and keep it

<sup>1</sup> The information regarding official ranks and administration is compiled from notes of interviews with some sixteen Akikuyu on about twenty-eight different occasions. The most valuable help as to the status and duties of these different classes was finally obtained from Mungé, whose statements were very precise and definite.

shaved henceforth, the young warrior stage with its adorned lock being in theory a thing of the past, but for this form of denial, personal vanity is at times too strong. It will be remembered that this is also the juncture at which he must cease to attend dances. He is the respectable and established head of a family. In course of time it was stated the office will fall to the rising generation, Muirun'gu, at present its members belong to the older generation, Mwan'gi—this last fact was checked in individual instance. The grade is not only of less importance, but also seems to be somewhat less definite than either of the two superior ranks. At the same time according to the chiefs of two different districts, its adoption is compulsory, although in one district it might be deferred till after the birth of three or even four children. The name as well as the conditions vary in different localities. The equivalent office in Karuri's district is known as N'dun'-du, in the Nairobi district its place is apparently taken by the Ke thi ga.

The second official rank, *Ki á ma*, is attained when a man's first child is old enough for the formal admission into the tribe, and he then gives one goat to the N'ja ma.<sup>1</sup> After the child has gone through the rites, he gives two more goats for the other Kiama to eat, and is then a fully initiated member of the old men or governing class. If, however, he is a poor man, he is allowed to give in the first instance only one of these two last goats, and defer providing the second till his next child is initiated, holding meanwhile a somewhat inferior rank amongst his fellow Kiama. The Kiama has a wand of office,<sup>2</sup> and wears a particular type of ear ring (*ki chan' go*). There is also sentiment attached in his case to the bunch of leaves which Akikúyu often carry on a journey, and which takes the place of a handkerchief. This with a Kiama is

<sup>1</sup> See p. 199

<sup>2</sup> This may be made from the wood of one of three trees the Mu tí gi the Mun -deren -du, or the Mu tá zi.



of A M A k n pho by k n d ge un

A KIKUYU IDIR KIAMA)

B aring staff of office ✕ 9

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 190.

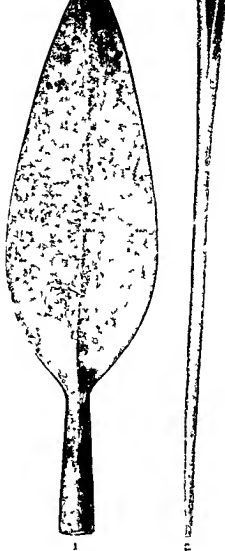
<sup>2</sup> This may be made from the wood of one of three trees, the *Mun'-deren'-du*, or the *Mu-tá zé*.



formed of one particular herbage,<sup>1</sup> and any unauthorised person seen using it comes under his curse. When no longer needed the bunch must not be thrown away, but placed on the top of one of the little barns in the homestead.

Besides the councils of the old men, there exists in each locality a body for which perhaps the best description is that of practical executive or glorified voluntary police, and which goes by the name of the *N'jama*. This term is used when speaking of the headmen who used to take the lead in war, and it may therefore be presumed that the members of the force are the representatives of the former military leaders, who were persons of power and position. In old days we were told the *N'jama* were as chiefs. The body has a head. It consists of young men, and all are eligible, but new comers can only be received by consent of the body, or in other words are co-opted. They pay their footing by means of the usual goat. Their powers are somewhat vague, and include judicial attributes, but, generally speaking, it may be said that with them rests the keeping of order, more especially in regard to affairs or delinquencies outside the immediate homestead, or in which more than one district is concerned. "They go far," is the answer usually obtained to inquiries on this head, and one supreme effort to make clear their duties evolved the statement that they 'go and tell people not to kill other people on the road'. Their position is one of eminence. It can also be one of considerable tyranny. Theoretically, offences amongst this body are dealt with by the *Kiama*, but it is not surprising that the *N'jama* of a district have been known on occasion to become little better than a body of freebooters. In some districts (*e.g.* Nairobi and Koriari's) members of the *N'jama* are obliged to resign on becoming qualified to enter the *Kiama*; in others (*e.g.* Mungé's) they can continue in the body if they desire to do so.

<sup>1</sup> The shrub is known as *Ma tú ra N gu ru*.



*Her. Mus. (A.)*

#### A VETERAN'S SPEAR (ka m'-di)

Fig. 1. The blade (ti mu)—length,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  in. maximum width, 3 in., weight,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  oz.—is united by a wooden shaft (cf. Pl. VII p. 18b) to

Fig. 2. The iron butt, or spike (mu la), which gives balance, and by which it is driven into the ground when not held in the hand. No spear is ever laid on the ground. Length, 16 in., maximum circumference, 3 in., weight, 9½ oz.

The fighting spear is shown in Pl. XXV p. 26c, but it is heavy to carry, hence this pattern is usually adopted by elderly men and by lads when herding the flocks. Cf. Pl. VII p. 18b.

formed of one particular herbage,<sup>1</sup> and any unauthorised person seen using it comes under his curse. When no longer needed the bunch must not be thrown away, but placed on the top of one of the little barns in the homestead.

Besides the councils of the old men, there exists in each locality a body for which perhaps the best description is that of practical executive or glorified voluntary police, and which goes by the name of the *N'jama*. This term is used when speaking of the headmen who used to take the lead in war, and it may therefore be presumed that the members of the force are the representatives of the former military leaders, who were persons of power and position. In old days we were told the *N'jama* were as chiefs. The body has a head. It consists of young men, and all are eligible, but newcomers can only be received by consent of the body, or in other words are co-opted. They pay their footing by means of the usual goat. Their powers are somewhat vague, and include judicial attributes, but, generally speaking, it may be said that with them rests the keeping of order, more especially in regard to affairs or delinquencies outside the immediate homestead, or in which more than one district is concerned. "They go far," is the answer usually obtained to inquiries on this head, and one supreme effort to make clear their duties evolved the statement that they "go and tell people not to kill other people on the road." Their position is one of eminence. It can also be one of considerable tyranny. Theoretically, offences amongst this body are dealt with by the *Kiama*, but it is not surprising that the *N'jama* of a district have been known on occasion to become little better than a body of freebooters. In some districts (e.g. Nairobi and Ko ru ri's) members of the *N'jama* are obliged to resign on becoming qualified to enter the *Kiama*, in others (e.g. Mungé's) they can continue in the body if they desire to do so.

<sup>1</sup> The shrub is known as *Mia tú ri Nguru*.

In addition to these regular functionaries, there may be seen to day in connection with the entourage of a chief a number of young men or hangers on, who form a sort of body-guard, and who are always described by the Swahili word *asihari*. They act under orders from the N'jáma and chief in the administration of justice. These come from a distance, stay a few months, and go home again. They receive presents but not pay, in fact take the same position as the armed retainer in the household of the mediæval baron.

The first real insight obtained into Kikuyu official circles was at a drinking party given in honour of my husband by the chief Mungé, where precedence and rank were strictly observed and the gathering was therefore of peculiar interest.

Mungé's homestead is on the side of a hill, which commands glorious views over the adjacent country. The stranger enters first the outer enclosure through a small archway in a hedge some 12 ft. in height, and again through a similar archway into the inner dwelling ground. It contains, like all other compounds of the wealthier men, many huts, comprising the chief's own residence, the dwellings of the respective wives, the bachelor quarters and so forth. The party took place in the middle of the day, and in the shade given by different huts were formed six distinct circles. On the highest ground a little removed were fifteen women, some belonging to the homestead and the rest visitors, who watched and applauded with their shrill little trilling cry. The principal women took a part, as will be seen in the function.

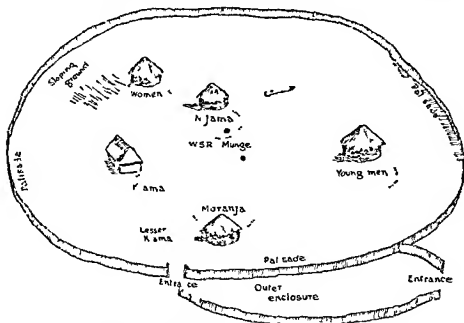
A little lower, beneath the eaves of a hut, on the right was the circle of honour, comprising thirty-seven persons, including the chief. These were men mostly in younger middle life, the N'jáma or executive force, and amongst them their headman or leader.

Under the shadow of another hut a little to the left was

a group of twenty old men, the elders of the tribe, the judges or Kiáma, who carry a wooden staff as a mark of office.

A little gathering by themselves, lower down, were six more old men qualified to enter the ranks of the Kiáma, but who had not yet paid up the necessary goats, and consequently formed somewhat of a butt for good-natured jibes.

By a hut on low ground near the entrance, were twenty-



A DRINKING PARTY SEATED ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL RANK.

two young married men, Moran'ja, to whom later would fall higher judicial position, while a little distance off was yet another group, comprised of Asikaris

On the arrival of the guest of the occasion, the chief greeted him, and introduced him to the circle of the N'jama. He then took gourds of native beer (n'jóhi) and distributed them to the gathering, two being given to each circle, except to the circle of young men, who did not drink. At what may be metaphorically termed the high table, Munge

began by washing his own drinking cup and hands, and filling up the horn offered it first to the chief guest, the cup was again filled up and Mungé himself drank. The two gourds, with their accompanying horns, proceeded to travel round the circle, one to the right and the other to the left, and each man partook in turn, drinking about a pint and a half at a gulp. This procedure was the same in the other circles till all the gourds were empty. According to custom the guests spilt or spat out a little of the liquor as a religious offering, but this was not absolutely universal.

One of the old men, from the group of Kiama, brought my husband a horn full of liquor to drink and the chief's brother in the same way brought a special draught to him and Mungé. Mungé's mother came up to the N'jáma circle, but did not sit down, had a drink and went away. Presents followed to the white strangers. Mungé gave my husband a rupee, and I received one from the head wife, and one from the eldest son. Two young warriors each sang a solo, all joining in the chorus and the ladies applauding. Mungé made a speech, during which he offered prayer to God for rain and a plentiful harvest. A Medicine Man followed with a discourse, whose pleasing platitudes were worthy of any after dinner oratory, he dwelt on the beauty of the situation, and lauded the popularity of the host, who, he said, was nearly qualified himself to be a Medicine Man. Mungé made another speech, insisting on the necessity of being careful of food, as there was a prospective scarcity, and the gathering then broke up. perfect quiet and dignified order prevailed throughout.

The following list of the rights of different parts of society in the important event of the killing of an ox, given by Mungé, is not without interest. The N'jáma take the breast, the Kiama the belly and saddle, the Moran'ja the back, the young men the head, neck, and ribs. The women are allowed the inside

## ADMINISTRATION

It is difficult to draw hard-and-fast lines as to the division of administrative functions. All the three bodies enumerated, Moran'ja, Kiáma, and N'jáma, may generally be seen taking part in judicial councils. The best guide as to the department primarily concerned lies in the distribution of the court fees, namely, the goats paid into court by the suitors. The various grades bring also with them religious duties.

## MORAN'JA

*Civil Duty.*—They are present with the Kiáma and N'jáma on inquests for theft, but they listen, they do not take part. The goats paid by the plaintiff and defendant are divided as follows: Moran'ja take one leg, Kiáma also have one leg, and the N'jáma take the remainder.

*Religious Duties.*—It falls to them in case of emergency, such as drought, to call together the N'jáma, and see that the sacrificial goat is offered.

## KIA'MA

*Civil Duties* involve more particularly offences against the person, and include trying cases of—

Murder.

Seduction. It is their duty to see that the right number of goats is paid to the father of the girl who has been wronged. The N'jáma take part in the discussion, but it is the Kiáma who receive all the fees. Any share allowed to the N'jáma is of grace, not right.

Wounding. In which they also affix the bracelet of skin worn as a charm in such cases.

Theft. This they judge, as has been said, conjointly with the N'jáma, the Moran'ja being present.

*Religious Duties* —They take part in the sacrifice to God, eating the sacrificial sheep They perform various duties connected with ceremonial uncleanness other than those for which a Medicine Man must be called in

### N'JA'MA

*Civil Duties* include the following To look after roads, bridges, and markets, to decide in cases of dispute as to boundaries of land, to intervene in cases of riot at native dances, etc., to see justice is done in cases of breach of promise of marriage, to catch and judge thieves, to catch murderers if necessary If a cow is sold, to see that the seller receives the gift of a calf, to which he is entitled by custom if the cow prove productive To these, since the English occupation, is added the somewhat prosaic duty of collecting porters In some cases, such as seeing to the restitution of stolen property and deciding as to boundaries, the duties of the Kiáma and N'jama are apparently interchangeable The sufferer would appeal to which ever of the authorities was nearest and most convenient If, however, stolen property had been removed to a distance, its recovery would naturally be the duty of the N'jáma

*Religious Duties* —To kill God's goat

### JUDICIAL PROCEDURE

The following *illustrations* may help to make clearer the working of these primitive arrangements —

One old man, a Kiáma, gave three illustrations of cases in which he had been judicially engaged A father from a neighbouring homestead had come to him, he said, to complain with regard to the seduction of his daughter My friend went to interview the father of the man who was accused and who lived about a mile away, in this instance the young man had



said that "he was very fond of the girl, and would like to marry her." His father therefore had paid up the marriage portion—thirty goats; if he had declined to marry her, a fine of ten goats would have been exacted.

In the second instance, two girls, one the man's own daughter, went to cut wood; they quarrelled about the wood, and one cut the other with a knife. Here the judges were two Kiámas, the respective fathers, and a fine in sheep was paid up.

The third case was a quarrel between two young men as to the boundaries of respective shambas; two Kiáma were engaged again, of whom my authority was one, and the dispute was settled by them.

One of our boys, N'jarge, had been at work in Nairobi, and while there saved eighteen rupees, which he entrusted to a friend who was immediately returning to his homestead, which was in Kikúyu, though some little distance from that of N'jarge. When we were staying near the home of N'jarge the boy became anxious about his property, more especially as the friend had since died and his heirs taken possession of his belongings. He therefore got two N'jáma from his own district and went with them to claim it. The liability was apparently not denied, but the law expenses were distinctly heavy. The neighbouring chief wished for three rupees, and the N'jáma demanded a sheep worth five rupees, or nearly one-half of all of the debt for the cost of collection.

The above are simple, or in our phraseology undefended cases; when guilt is denied or complications ensue, the Bantu genius for words is seen at its best. Lengthy debate on every possible occasion is second nature to the Akikúyu. A shauri or discussion is held on some open space. Those who are entitled to be heard, take part, the others look on. Order is kept by a simple device, which takes the place of "catching the Speaker's eye." The club of the first speaker is passed on from one to another of those who desire to express

their views, and no man is allowed to address the assembly till he holds it in his hand. Two persons cannot thus speak at the same time. While theoretically all old men are eligible for judicial function, in practice, as might be expected, this falls into the hands of those most qualified to exercise it. Intelligence is much prized, and so is eloquence. A particular beetle<sup>1</sup> carries with it the power of conviction, and if an old man finds one of these he rejoices greatly. He takes a banana and makes a hole in it, puts the beetle in the banana and dries it in the sun. Then the day before he has to go to a shauri, where he is anxious that his words shall receive due attention, he eats the banana and the beetle, and tells no one. He finds himself gifted with many words, every one hangs on his utterance, his arguments are overwhelming, and no one knows that he has eaten the beetle.

Independently, however, of such abnormal aids, it is obvious that in every assembly one man with force of character will arrive at a position of eminence. According to the natives, "Such and such a man, or his father, was in old days a leader of shaunis, because after hearing the evidence he had intelligence to say that a man was or was not a thief." Military talent also brought a man to the fore. The able man was the man who accumulated riches, and wealth is an even more potent factor in primitive than in civilised society. A rich man with many wives, sons in law, and hangers on, must always be a powerful force. The hereditary tendency under such circumstances can hardly fail to be at work. The son may have no rights, but chances are in his favour. Mungé claimed that his ancestors had been leading men for four generations, but this did not involve primogeniture, as he himself has at the present time an elder brother relegated to private life on account of want of mental acumen. It is on this state of affairs that the English rule has laid its

<sup>1</sup> *Melaspis labrispennis* (Holbe).

hand for purposes of administration, exalting these leaders into the position of petty chiefs, and making them responsible for the collection of hut tax. There is, therefore, now a tendency, probably increasing, for difficult cases to be referred from the old men to the chief, or taken to the chief's residence and judged by the chief and elders in conjunction. Disputes may even be brought to the chief in the first instance. In the illustration given above of the method of the collection of a debt from the heirs of the deceased, it was explained to me that in old days it would have been the business of the *Kiáma* who lived in the debtor's district to see to the matter, now it was the chief who was responsible. The *N'jáma* also probably tend to stand increasingly in a personal relationship to the chief, and act as a Council of State. But it was emphatically declared that the chief's power of appointment to the body could always be vetoed by the body itself, that it was primarily co optive. Kikuyu justice as at present administered, shows, it may be said, two forces at work, the older and newer, or more democratic and monarchical. A chief is still not distinguished in theory from the rest of the people. His daughter fetches no higher marli. The money which would be paid in compensation for his death (his *vergild* in Anglo-Saxon phraseology) is no greater than that of the commonalty. He is entitled to no special funeral rites. The greatest astonishment was expressed on the question being asked if one of the principal chiefs would, if he were to die, receive the tribute of honour due to old men on being accorded burial. "He was only a young man," it was explained. "He would, of course, like the rest of the world, be put out for the hyenas."

The Chief Munge, as will be seen, took the lead in offering the sacrifice witnessed to *N'gai* (God). It did not transpire whether he would always be entitled to do so, and whether or no his priestly character was connected with his official position.

The two following accounts of present procedure in the case of a serious law suit seem worth quoting here —

The first is that given by an M'likúyu "Any man who has seen a theft, goes and tells the owner, and claims the bakshishi which is due to an informer. Then the owner and the witness, with the young men" (i N'jáma), "go to the thief and demand the property. The thief then restores the stolen property, and if so, he also gives a sheep to the young men for their trouble, but if he will not do so there is a local shauri. If this is unsuccessful, owing to the judges not being able to agree all concerned the plaintiff, the defendant, and the old men, come to the big chief. The elders from the big chief join. Each side gives a present to the elders. Every one has their say, and the elders agree amongst themselves."

The second version was given by a Swahili boy, who was well acquainted with the customs of the Akikuyu.

"The plaintiff comes with his friends, both old men and young men, from his district, and the defendant comes with his friends, both old men and young men, from his district, and they all assemble at the chief's quarters, and other old men gather up. The plaintiff and the defendant each has his say, and the old men say 'The words of the plaintiff are many, and of the defendant few', and they say to the defendant, 'Go and talk with your friends'. The defendant and his party retire and he confesses his guilt to his friends, which he will not do in court, and the friends come back and say the defendant confesses that he is guilty. If the defendant will not acknowledge his guilt the old men ask the plaintiff why he said that the defendant was guilty. If the accused still will not confess and his words are very few, the court declares him guilty, but it is the custom of the Akikuyu every day to confess their guilt. Two sheep are given one to the elders and the other to the chief."



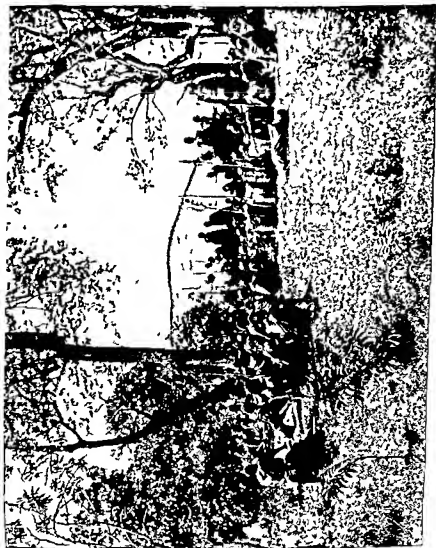
N'JU-GU'-MA YA MOR-A'-NI

An ornamental n'ju-gu'-ma, or "life-preserver," carried by a warrior or by an elder when paying a visit or attending a public meeting. Such a stick would be passed from speaker to speaker.

This specimen is very old-fashioned, and is considered by the Akikuyu to be very choice.

Pattern unusual, of wood, carved in one piece.

22½ in long, diameter of head, 1½ in



KIKUYU COURT OF JUSTICE

W. S. K. photo

The scene is the murder trial, p. 210 The elders are in the act of retiring for private conference

## NOTES TAKEN AT KIKÚYU TRIALS

THE following are taken from my notes of trials at which I<sup>1</sup> was present. The actions of those concerned were noted, and as full information as possible obtained from those taking part or through retainers.

The accounts are accurate to the best of my belief, though they are not as full as I could wish, as I was, at the time the opportunity offered, recovering from a somewhat severe illness, and incapable of sitting for hours consecutively in a native assembly under a tropical sun.

## At the Chief Wombúgu's

*Dec. 25, 1907.—Cattle stealing.*

The circle contained elders (Kíáma from village of theft and from Wombúgu's), witnesses, plaintiff, and defendant; young men were seated outside. The president of the court was at first an N'jáma described as "clever of words and of much intelligence," later Wombúgu himself. One old man was accused of stealing a cow belonging to another; after some discussion the president told the accused's party to go and confer. They all went off to a little distance, and discussed matters by themselves. The accused confessed his guilt to his friends and afterwards to the court; the compensa-

<sup>1</sup> K. R.

## 210 NOTES TAKEN AT KIKUYU TRIALS

tion was mutually arranged, and he was sentenced to pay fifteen goats in six days.

*Dec. 28, 1907.—Goat stealing.*

An old man was accused of stealing a young man's goats. One of the elders presiding. All talked together. It was decided to have been an affair of the market.

*Jan. 3, 1908.—Murder.*

Some thirty Kiáma present, about half from neighbourhood of deceased. Murder had been committed about six months previously; murderer had run away and now returned; he was not present at the trial. The son of deceased made an impassioned address, saying if the guilty man did not pay up the blood-money he would kill him. Another son also spoke. Elders went away and conferred, perhaps a quarter of an hour. On the return of the judges to court, debate turned on subject of reward to be paid to informer; son said he had paid up once (a cow), and would not do so again; this statement was disputed. The symptoms of the victim prior to decease were also discussed. The elders again retired for private consultation, and after remaining long absent the court was adjourned. The whole sitting lasted about two hours. Later, I received information that the murderer had been sentenced to pay the due compensation.

*Jan. 8, 1908.—Goat accidentally killed.*

Wombúgu presiding, no elders. Small goat-herd had gone to Nairobi, taken service, and struck the goat of his master so that it died, and then run away. The master pursued. Boy, master, and father of boy present. Father offered to give compensation, if Wombúgu awarded it, saying, "I am not a thief." Master claimed three goats, saying that the one killed was a female with kid. Sentence—"One goat to be



paid up." The father said he would bring a big one. Master refused to accept the first one brought, saying it had no teeth; a second brought, also sent away—too small.

*Jan. 8, 1908.—Claim to inherit.*

Wombúgu presiding. Present, Kiáma of district concerned, plaintiff and defendant. Young men had gone to a distance, cultivated a shamba, and died. One of the elders of the district had annexed the shamba; the brother of the deceased claimed it. The defendant said he had paid for the property. Finally, friends on both sides stated no payment had been made, and old man admitted the same in court. Judgment given by Wombúgu that the brother was to take possession.

*Jan. 8, 1908.—Purchase of Shamba.*

Present, Wombúgu and elders of district concerned, plaintiff and defendant, etc. Plaintiff claimed defendant had bought shamba and not paid price. Court split up into three circles; plaintiff was surrounded by his relations, defendant by his, the judges meanwhile partook of refreshment.

The defendant confessed to friends, and subsequently to court, that he had not paid for the property. Judgment—Plaintiff was to resume possession in four days.

*Jan. 8, 1908.—Detention of Goats.*

Large circle. Present, Wombúgu and Kiáma from Wombúgu's. Plaintiff from Wombúgu's district sued defendant from district of Chief Hen'ge, whom he alleged had detained two goats, defendant's property: claimed ten goats in compensation. Defendant was present, and two others from Hen'ge's district—whether in an official character, or as friends only, did not transpire. It appeared that plaintiff had placed a goat in the keeping of the defendant, where it had borne three kids, making four goats in all. Plaintiff had resumed two goats and claimed

## 212 NOTES TAKEN AT KIKÚYU TRIALS

remainder Discussion in court Later, defendant confessed to friend privately, had two goats still in his possession, friend returned to court, plaintiff remaining alone Judgment—Defendant to pay up two goats

*Jan 4, 1908 —Trespass*

Case tried before Wombugu Dispute between a small boy and young man The boy stated the young man had entered his shamba in quest of firewood The man accused the boy of insulting him Boy condemned to pay the goat

(In answer to a question—"the boy's shamba, or his mother's shamba, are all the same thing")

At Chief MUNGÉ's

*Jan 11, 1908 —Breach of Promise of Marriage*

Small court Present, one N'jáma, one elder, and young men cognisant of the affair, to ratify return of goats to young man by father of girl who had changed her mind, and declined to fulfil engagement of marriage

Before Chief KA RÚ RI

*Breach of Promise of Marriage*

Case referred to Karuri on circuit by elders of district concerned A girl had refused to fulfil her contract of marriage, and the goats could not be returned, for they had been eaten her father is dead Judgment—She must marry the suitor.

TRIAL BY ORDEAL (Mu ma)

Trial by ordeal finds place among the Kikuyu It is generally the affair of the Medicine Man, but sometimes is

superintended by the elders. The following are some of the methods by which guilt or innocence are decided :—

Medicine is made and placed on the eyelids of both plaintiff and defendant ; if it remains and hurts the man he is guilty, if it falls down he is innocent

The Medicine-Man makes a knife red hot in the fire and touches first the tongue and then the foot of both parties ; if it does not burn, the man is innocent ; it "cannot burn both."

The Medicine-Man puts hot ash into boiling water, which has to be removed by the suspected person. In the particular instance reported the flesh came off the arm, therefore the man was guilty.

The following account was given by a native eye-witness. A death had occurred where poison was suspected. The persons whose guilt was possible were ranged in a row ; the Medicine-Man went down anointing their nostrils with medicine ; then he took a small animal (not a rat) and held it to the nostrils of each in turn. Three were bitten, and these had to go through a second ordeal. They brought a sheep, which was killed and eaten, if they were guilty, God would kill them in a month. In this case they did not die, but suspicion was apparently not removed, as it was generally said that one had committed the crime

The elders arrange a forced trial by ordeal of mixing the urine of the two parties, which both drink. The guilty one will die in a month ; if neither die, "both have told lies."

The following instance of such a trial was witnessed by myself in April 1908, on the spare land adjoining the village of the Chief Wombúgu. A preliminary trial took place, the plaintiff and defendant being present, and all sorts of persons, young and old, also the chief himself. A father accused an old man of having killed his son by witchcraft by means of putting sticks in his path, and also of having done to death other people in the same village. The accused demanded

why, if he was held to have done it, he had not been seized ? The plaintiff answered that he had been advised to do so, but had hesitated to comply "If," he argued, "the accused has done no harm, why did he say some time ago, 'Your village will come to naught' ?" Both plaintiff and defendant stood up to speak, the father armed with spear and sword and brandishing his club, all were much in earnest. The line taken by the friends of the accused was academic and non committal "He had," they said, "not taken *their* sheep, but as to this affair they did not know the truth about it, and hoped that he would not be told. If a goat dies it is nothing, if a man dies it is a great deal. They trusted that the case would go to the ordeal." The defendant and his friends, therefore, retired and consulted on this suggestion, the result, to accede to it, being apparently a foregone conclusion. A native onlooker informed me that the guilt of the accused was known, because an accomplice, who went with him to buy the medicine, and had assisted in storing it in a tree, and also later in putting it in the path of the deceased, had subsequently confessed. The evil doer would, he explained, in old days have been killed on the spot, now they were "afraid of the White Men."

The inquiry was held in the morning, the ordeal was deferred till about three o'clock in the afternoon. It took place on a piece of sloping ground which formed a natural amphitheatre. In the middle crouched the accused man. Round his neck he wore a rough collar of grass or sticks put there by the Medicine Man, and across his shoulders was a small female sheep, the legs were held at first with the left hand, the head with the right. Two sticks had been placed through the neck, the skin of which had apparently been cut so that the flesh protruded. This raw flesh he proceeded to bite off and devour, spitting out some on the grass and protesting his innocence in a loud voice between the mouth-

fuls. The onlookers interpolated remarks from time to time, such as: "If he has done no harm, why did people die when he came near the village?" Half-way through the ordeal he turned the sheep on its other side, so that its tail was at his right hand. Through the root of this two sticks had in the same way been placed so that the intestines obtruded. This he again ate in the same manner. The father of the alleged victim took, so far as could be seen, no part in the affair. The whole proceeding lasted about twenty minutes or half an hour. The man then took off the sheep, broke the collar round his neck, which he threw away, ate two pieces of potato, and later, sugar cane. One of the spectators called out that "the accused must never again be called a poisoner, for he had partaken of ordeal very severe." Three men were told off to watch that he did not have recourse to a Medicine-Man for purification and thus defeat the ends of justice. As we were at the time on the way to the coast it is impossible to state whether or not he established his innocence by triumphantly surviving the effects of the "ordeal very severe."

## CODES OF JUSTICE

For personal injury penalties are exacted as follows. The particulars were collected from three districts.

	District 1.	District 2.	District 3.
Killing (a) Man	120 goats, 1 cow.	100 goats and 9 milk goats.	100 goats and 9 sheep.
" (b) Woman	30 "	40 goats & sheep.	30 goats.
Loss of arm	40 to 60 goats.	40 "	50 "
" leg	40 " 60 "	50 "	...
" eye	40 " 60 "	30 "	10 goats.
" knee	...	40 "	...
" foot	...	40 "	...
" finger (whole)	...	30 "	30 goats.
" " (each joint)	10 goats.	10 "	10 "

Except in case of murder, the penalty is the same whether the injury is to man or woman

Where two forfeits are mentioned, the additional animals are the fee to be paid to the elders

### *Theft*

District 1 —For 1 goat stolen, repayment 2 or 3 goats

For 2 goats " " 3 goats

If goat is not put with herd, but killed and eaten, fine 10 goats

District 2 —For 1 goat stolen repayment 4 goats and 1 sheep for elders.

For 10 goats " " 20 " " " "

For stealing { " 3 " for man.

honey from { " 1 " woman

bee box { " 1 " child

District 3 —For each goat stolen, repayment 10 goats

District 4 —1 goat stolen, repayment 10 goats

1 ox " " 4 oxen

Honey " " 10 goats for man, 3 goats for woman, boy, or very old man.

### *Persistent Theft*

District 4 —If no possessions, first time if hungry is fined one sheep for the elders to eat. Second offence, banished. If caught again, burnt alive with grass round neck.

District 2 —If a man proves an incorrigible thief, all he has is taken and he is "killed at night like a sheep," or a man is given a sheep to go behind and stab him with a spear

District 1 —Information from N'járgé, son of Chief Mungé

" 2 " " Wamáheu, brother of Chief Wombúgu.

" 3 " " Karánja Court interpreter at Nyen

" 4 " " Chief Karuri.

The code with regard to *seduction* has been already dealt with <sup>1</sup>

For abuse of a child, the culprit is said to be severely beaten with a club, fined twenty goats and sent out of the country, besides, it was added, "the deed may be seen by the N'góma, and he will become sick and die" The procedure with regard to *divorce* depends on whether a woman has, or

<sup>1</sup> See p 126.

has not borne a child If she has become or is about to become a mother, the refund of the marriage price cannot be asked for under any circumstances, punishment is bestowed for wrongdoing by a severe beating, and if she continues in her evil courses the husband may theoretically tell her "to go away", practically, owing to the value of women, it is doubtful if this last is ever done

The liability of the co-respondent in this case was not clear If, however, a wife who has proved unfaithful has not borne a child, the father collects the elders, as many possibly as five or six, and they go to the co respondent, who gives them court fees in the shape of a sheep, which they eat and retire to their homes, while the accused prepares n'johi The next day the elders again appear, drink the n'johi, and the co respondent pays up ten goats and one sheep, which are taken to the father The procedure then varies according to whether the husband does or does not wish to keep the wife If he desires to retain her, the father passes on to him five of the goats and the wife takes back a sheep as a trespass offering

If the wife is to be returned as an unsatisfactory bargain, the father keeps all the goats paid by the co respondent pays back the marl to the husband and she can be sold again

A woman who does not like her husband can return to her father, and if she wishes to go her husband will not attempt to keep her If there has been no child the marl will be returned, and she can become another man's wife If there is a child the husband will keep it, and she cannot be married again Wives are never sold by their husbands

his service, entrusting the three sheep to a friend, and during the owner's absence they were stolen. It was explained by the natives that in the old days Karanja would under these circumstances, have gone to the Kiama, and they would have conferred much and got back the sheep, now he would come to the master and ask for a letter to the Government official at Fort Hall (the capital of the province). What did as a matter of fact, happen, was that the boy went and told three Kiama, but the great chief Karuri happening to come round at the time, the matter was laid before him, and the sheep, I believe, duly recovered.

The present and avowed object of the East African Judiciary is to suppress native justice altogether as derogatory to the dignity of the British courts. Even allowing for all the imperfections of primitive methods this shows a point of view at which it is hard to arrive.

It is of course desirable that a right of access and appeal should lie to the English courts, and that they should have the final word in grave cases but for a white magistrate to spend his time, except in the last resort endeavouring to recover three Kikuyu sheep seems both waste of energy and also most undesirable.

Not only has the native access to information impossible to his superiors but it is also extremely doubtful whether amongst an uncivilised people the methods of a white man's court are always conducive to the ends of justice. The effect on the native mind of a culprit whose guilt is well known let off because of some technical flaw in the evidence is disastrous to a degree.

An English official is allowed to administer justice according to native custom when he deems it desirable but it by no means follows that he is in a position to appreciate what that custom is. Nor are his ideas of 'making the punishment fit the crime' necessarily more successful.



Theoretically also it is an obvious absurdity to speak of raising the natives and at the same time deprive them of the best means of education, namely, self-government. This comes with a peculiarly bad grace from a people who are fond of pointing to their own primitive government as containing the germ of future greatness, at a time when its methods can have been little if at all less crude than those found amongst the Akikúyu of to-day.

Since writing the above I am informed by a high official from Nigeria that the practice in that colony is for the English Government to depute a native to be present at native trials who has sufficient knowledge of English to make brief notes of the same for the benefit of the authorities. The British official also attends from time to time at the native courts in his district. This practice might be commended to East Africa.

## EFFICACY OF KIKÚYU JUSTICE

The question naturally occurs how far were, or are, the Kikúyu methods of government successful in the detection of crime and the preservation of order. Little crime probably goes unknown in a small and stationary community, and information is encouraged by a substantial present being due to the informer from the injured party. Public opinion, as expressed by the elders, most likely does not go far wrong when it fixes on the criminal, although it may scarcely be guided by strict rules of evidence. In addition to this there is a curious and childlike impulse to confess on the part of the guilty person, which appears strongly in the record of cases.

The following forces tend for order and the carrying out of the decision of the elders. Firstly, the power of public opinion behind them and of custom, secondly, the responsibility of the family (dealt with more fully in considering the subject of clans), and in the last resort, what may be best described, though it deserves a better name, as lynch law. This is shown in the fate of persistent thieves and murderers at the hands of an aggrieved populace.

On the other hand, the court fees are no doubt a serious drawback in the case of the less wealthy suitors. It has been seen that half a debt may go in the costs of its recovery, and in a prolonged case the plaintiff and defendant have not only to pay up their original fees of one sheep each for the elders, but are called upon to repeat their donation at intervals while the trial lasts.

Cases must also have occurred where the criminal or criminals were too strong for the local powers of justice, or the powers were themselves implicated. One such instance was volunteered and it can hardly have been unique. Munge's son related that when he was about six years old there was

a conspiracy of old men to kill some rich neighbours, against whom they had no grievance, because they wanted their goods. The victims were killed with the spear and their goats taken. If his father had interfered he would have been told they were no relations of his. The story was, however, told in a way that showed it had made an impression on the child's mind as something out of the ordinary run.

Private justice and feud can never be wholly eliminated in uncivilised community, and it has been seen to be threatened in the foregoing murder trial; but as far as a stranger can gather, the idea of revenge is, as a rule, foreign to the Kikúyu temperament. It would always be a great deal more important to obtain the dead man's *wergild* than to seek corporal vengeance on his murderer. "What would happen," was asked, "if the relations of a murdered man wished to fight?" "The old men would say," was the answer, "do not fight, make a *shauri*." "But if a son killed the slayer of his father?" "Then the old men would say two men are dead, the affair is at an end."

The state of affairs was probably more or less accurately summed up by one native. "Some people," he said, "regretted the old days, he did not. Then, if you suffered wrong and were strong, you righted yourself; if you were rich you paid for justice, but if you were weak and poor there was no redress."

Since the British occupation, justice for natives is of course also administered in the English courts, and here again, even more than in the growing power of the chief, lies the tendency to destroy local administration. The following little story shows the state of affairs. An M'kikúyu named Ka-rán-ja, who had previously been with my husband, went during his absence in England into service in Nairobi. There he made enough money to buy two sheep, one of which gave birth to a lamb. When his old master returned he came back to

his service, entrusting the three sheep to a friend, and during the owner's absence they were stolen. It was explained by the natives that in the old days Karanja would, under these circumstances, have gone to the Kiáma, and they would have conferred much and got back the sheep; now he would come to the master and ask for a letter to the Government official at Fort Hall (the capital of the province). What did, as a matter of fact, happen, was that the boy went and told three Kiáma, but the great chief Karuri happening to come round at the time, the matter was laid before him, and the sheep, I believe, duly recovered.

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## PART III

# RELIGION

*"Few who will give their minds to master the general principles of savage religion will ever again think it ridiculous or the knowledge of it superfluous to the rest of mankind."*—TYLOR.

## PART III

### RELIGION

#### CONCEPTION OF THE DEITY

It is, it need hardly be said, a most difficult task to crystallise in writing any human conception of that mysterious Power or Personality which transcends natural forces. It is said that the majority of Englishmen would find it impossible intelligently to define their religious belief, and the difficulties are, naturally, even greater for the uncivilised mind. Error, too, often creeps in through the mere act of formulating in words ideas, which are themselves, it may be, entirely undefined. The story of what the Akikúyu believe and think with regard to supernatural powers in this life, and existence after death, has been told, when feasible, in their own words. Special care has been taken to disentangle as far as possible such conceptions from any that may have been derived from the influence of Christianity, where it is at all possible that the two may have come in contact. Until the last few years their natural religion was quite uncontaminated.

We were riding home one evening with a particularly glorious sunset lighting up the summit of Mount Kénýa, which rose above a belt of golden cloud, when our friend Wa-má-heu volunteered, "God (N'gai) lives on Kénýa. The Swahilis (Mohammedans) and the missionaries say that he lives in the sky, but they are wrong. He has no father nor mother, nor wife nor children; he is all alone." In answer to a question, "He has no messengers ('askaris'); he does all his own work." Another time he told us, "God does not eat. He is neither a

child nor an old man he is the same to day as he was yesterday " Asked, " Do the missionaries say all this ? " The answer was " The Akikuyu knew it before The missionaries say there is one God but I think they are wrong This one is the white God, the God of the Masai is the black God The God of the Swahili would be the black God " " And the God of the Akamba ? " " He would, I think, be the same as that of the Akikuyu for the old men say that they are all one people "

The term usually employed in speaking of the Deity (N'gai) is of Masai origin In solemn sacrifice he is addressed as *Mwi nin ya ga* or " Possessor of Whiteness " with which it is interesting to compare the Kikuyu name for Kenya *Ki ri nyá ga*, meaning " Place of Whiteness "

The Being thus described is not visible to the ordinary mortal eye The reply received to a query as to whether the ' ghosts of the dead (N'go ma) could ever be seen " was

No they are like God ' but the sun the moon lightning and rain are all in a sense worshipped as manifestations of the great Power a conception apparently not dissimilar to that of the poet when he sings of One

Whose robe is the light Whose canopy space.

The prayer of a Medicine Man when he invokes Divine aid is addressed to God the Sun or Kenya as ' all the same thing In the same manner God's dwelling is localised in different places more especially on Kenya but also on Kinangop known to the Kikuyu as *Ny an da rou* and in sacred trees The God is one and the same but the M'kikuyu who has no ' temples made with hands " turns for worship to the nearest object of reverence probably in much the same way as an ordinary Christian regards a sacred building as the House of God '

This God hears and answers prayer To a question carefully worded as to the attitude of the Deity to men the



rather striking answer was received, "God loves every one, but if people are poor, or if a warrior loses his wife and child, then he says, God does not love him" This boy, to the best of my belief, had had no intercourse with missionaries. Another M'kikuyu gave expression to the same idea before Christian missions had ever been heard of "God," he said, "was a God of love, but those who disobeyed him, he punished by famine, disease, and death"

The Alíkúyu turn to God in time of drought or great distress, but the ordinary ills of life are usually ascribed to the action of the spirits of the departed, and are to be dealt with accordingly

The Supreme Being is wooed rather than propitiated by sacrifice. No religious service could well convey a more awe-inspiring sense of the nearness of the Creator than the Kikuyu sacrifice, hereafter described, performed as it was in direct communion with nature. The best which man possessed was, in this case, neither building, nor music, nor art, but the best of the flock, and it was most reverently offered for Divine acceptance. Presents to God establish a claim in return, and prayers are of course for temporal blessings. A brief and delightfully typical one was as follows "O God my Father, give me goats, give me sheep, give me children, that I may be rich, O God my Father"

Kikuyu religion has two sides, both resting on the same foundation, the belief in N'gai. From one aspect it may be said to be State established, or rather that Church and State are identical. The right to officiate in the most solemn service, the sacrifice to N'gai, devolves on the Elders and acting officials, and is conferred by rank in the State.

On the other side are a body of Medicine Men who are considered to be endowed with powers beyond the ordinary, but such powers are held to be derived from N'gai, and exercised through his assistance.

The performance of certain rites, such as ceremonial purification and trial by ordeal, fall under some circumstances to the Elders, and in others to the Medicine-Man. The Medicine-Man takes no part in instruction other than professional, and has nothing to do with the teaching of morality, which falls on the parents and Elders.

Speculation is idle and words no doubt vain where there are, and can be, no sufficient data. The impression, however, left on the mind of a beholder was, that if such a thing as priority can be said to exist at all, what has been called the State aspect of religion is probably a development of patriarchal religion, and as such the simpler and earlier. It is quite conceivable that even at the present stage a body of clever Medicine-Men might greatly extend their claims and powers at the expense of those of the Elders.

On one occasion only a dance before an image was witnessed. This has been already described (see pp 108, 198). It is difficult to say how far it was of a religious character and with what precise sentiments the figure was regarded. Another image is also made, which is connected in some way with praying for rain, Pl lxxxi.

## SACRIFICE TO GOD (N'GAÍ)

I<sup>1</sup> HAD for some time discussed with my friend the chief Mungé my desire to offer a sacrifice to N'gaí in the orthodox Kikuyu fashion. In February 1908, I accordingly sent word beforehand to request that an excellent sheep should be found, and all be in readiness on a day when I proposed coming to his village. This I found on my arrival had been accomplished. It was a ram with a white face, and its ears had not been slit, all these points being essential in a sheep for sacrifice, as I previously was aware.

On the day appointed for the ceremony the site was first decided on. It was situated on a rounded hilltop, with views extending to Mount Kinangop and the Range of Aberdare on the one hand, and, on the other, to the snowclad mass of Kénia. To the south, a sea of hills gradually merged into the plains of the Kam'ba country, whilst to the north the downs of Lei lĩ pĩ a, the land of the pastoral Masai, blended into the waterless country of the Ren dĩ lĩ.

A tree of the sacred kind was selected,\* though only a sapling, possibly because our tents had previously been pitched under the shade of the ancestral tree of sacrifice. It was subsequently explained that this young tree would always henceforth be sacred and never cut down. Those taking part in the ceremony in varying degree, in addition to Mungé and myself, were the three official ranks, N'ja ma, Kĩ a ma, and Mor an' ja, and certain old men who were designated as belonging to the generation M'wan' gi, and who apparently

<sup>1</sup> W S R.

<sup>2</sup> Mu gu mu. A form of ficus, otherwise known as mútĩ múgu or sacred tree (see p. 32).

tree by one of the N'jáma, the remainder retiring into the shade at a short distance, and taking no part in the work.

All the N'jáma and Mungé then gathered together round the tree; Mungé stood with his face to the west, the assistant with his face to the east. Mungé uttered a prayer, verse by verse, and at the end of each verse poured a small quantity of n'jóhi over the top of the tree and down its trunk. As he did so the others repeated the responses, and the assistant then went through the same procedure. During the prayer all stood with their hands held aloft.

The following is a translation of Mungé's prayer:—

“O God, accept this n'jóhi, for the white man has come to my homestead. If the white man becomes ill let him not be very ill nor his wife. The white man has come from his home through the waters; he is a good man; the people who work for him he treats well; let them not argue with him. If the white man and his wife get ill, let them not be very ill, because I and the white man unite in a sacrifice to you. Let him not die, because to you we sacrifice an excellent fat ram. The white man has come from afar to us, and has made an agreement with me to sacrifice to you. Wherever he may go let him not be very ill, because he is good and is exceedingly well-off, and I also am good and rich, and I and the white man are even as of one mother. God, a big sheep have I dedicated. The white man and his wife and I and my people go to sacrifice a sheep at the foot of a tree—a most valuable sheep. Let me not be very ill, for I have taught him how to sacrifice to you even as an M'kikúyu.”

The branches previously gathered were then brought, and the sheep spread on its back and suffocated. The carcass

<sup>1</sup> This was obtained by subsequently inducing the chief to repeat his prayer into a phonograph, and then having it translated.

was placed on a man's knee in a resting attitude, with its chest over the sacred branches, so that no blood should drop to the ground, an incision was made down the neck as far as the breast bone. One of the operators next blew down the sheep's nostrils, and then the windpipe and great vessels were tied. Mungé then drove his knife into its heart, and the blood was collected in a calabash.

The animal was now flayed, but the linear incision left an oval patch of skin attached to the breastbone. The carcase was carefully eviscerated and all the organs retained. Undigested food was thrown away. A long strip of fat was carefully prepared to wrap round the tree, and a small quantity of fat enclosed in a leaf. The bulk of the fat and this piece in the leaf were put aside in the skin. Portions of the fat, the kidneys, and the heart were next cut up and mixed with the blood in the calabash, the clot being squeezed through the hands. A part of the contents of this calabash was then placed in the stomach, which was skewered and tied. The remainder was put in the ileum and secured in the same way, thus making a couple of haggis or black puddings. The rectum and its contents were tied, and carefully preserved. The eyes were removed from the orbit, great care being taken not to break them.

A big fire was made and allowed to burn down, and a large grid of the usual pattern erected over the embers. The meat was thus cooked, the head being roasted first and the lower jaw removed. At this stage my wife, who had so far been made welcome, was given a discreet hint to retire, as women are not permitted by custom to see men eat meat.

When the meat was ready it was carried to the precincts of the sacred tree and laid on the boughs. The company took their places in three groups. Adjoining the tree were Munge, myself, four N'jáma and two M'wan'gi, all of these communicated by partaking of the meat, except one of the



A R ph r

# THE SACRIFICIAL

Showing meat offerings left at the foot of the sacred tree and remains of the wood employed. The point of the arrow indicates the strip of fat.

N'jáma.<sup>1</sup> Under another tree was a group of Kíáma, of whom two partook of the sacred feast, the others did not. Beneath a third tree sat the Moran'ja; they consumed n'jóhi, but no meat. Mungó first wrapped the strip of fat, which had been preserved, round the root of the tree; then, before beginning the feast, he took a joint, tore pieces from it with his teeth, spat them on the ground, spitting also into his left bosom. He subsequently placed a junk of meat at the foot of the tree, and I did the same. Offering having thus been made to God, two joints were picked out and sent to the Kíáma under the other tree, and all selected pieces for themselves. The morsels were held with the teeth, and cut with the sword or knife. All eating was done very slowly. Each man, as he ate, placed from time to time tit-bits on a pile in front of him beneath the tree; these were the offerings made to God, and the remains of the joint were finally added to them. Finding the half-cooked meat somewhat unappetising and exceedingly tough, my own pile of dedicated morsels was considerably larger than that of my fellow-worshippers. The two black puddings contained in the stomach and ileum were dealt with last of all; one was gnawed whole, the other divided into two pieces. The bulk of the fat meanwhile had been rendered down, and the solid portion of it was also added to the pile of consecrated meat. One half of the second pudding was then placed on the south of the tree. The penis of the ram was laid to the north, the tip of the tail to the west, and the head to the east. The head was first placed to the west, but this being observed by Mungé, he corrected it, and severely reprimanded those responsible. The shank bones were gnawed *pro forma*, and the thigh bones and other long bones split with a sword, and placed under the tree.

When the last remains of the sacrifice had been disposed

<sup>1</sup> No man who has eaten sacred meat resumes marital relations the following night.

of, all rose to their feet, and held both hands aloft Munge, facing west, took the liquid fat, and poured some in small quantities over and down the tree, between each outpouring offering a prayer The assistant, who stood facing east, and myself, standing next to Munge, followed suit Immediately the last of the fat was finished all lowered their arms and burst into song Meanwhile the heavens, which early in the day were blue and clear, had been growing black with gathering clouds, and just as the ceremony concluded, these broke in lightning and thunder, bringing with them, as God's answer to our prayers, the much needed rain The participants once more formed in order, and recessed in the drenching storm, singing a hymn, and leaving their gifts at the altar The ceremony concluded at 3 30, having lasted in all five hours

The following description of a sacrifice was given me on the occasion of my first visit to Kikuyu It differs from that which I witnessed, but the account was given with great detail, and I think it will prove accurate when verified

The ceremony was described as taking place at midnight After the sheep is killed, the black pudding is, it was said, cooked first, and the principal old man takes it and proceeds with it to the foot of the sacred tree, at the same time he takes with him a small calabash of gruel (He now places the meat offering on the ground, and pours out the gruel around, and then retires a short way into the darkness N'gai who has seen the fire being made in his grove, and watched the preparation of the sheep, now descends from heaven into his tree, and, when the old man places the offering on the ground and retires then does God, like one of the semi sacred monkeys, swing himself down the tree, eat up the food, and climb back again into its depths, where he may be heard moving amongst the branches

The old man, after a discreet interval, returns to the tree



and makes his prayer to N'gai, and seeks direction as to future action. For this purpose he places his ear against the tree-trunk. N'gai having partaken of the offering, is pleased, and, from amongst the branches high up, replies in such a way that his words are conducted through the tree-trunk, as it were through a stethoscope, to the ear of his servant at the foot of the tree. The old man then returns to the fire and to his assistants, and reports that N'gai has duly partaken of the sacrifice, and has given certain instructions. The flesh on the gridiron is then eaten by the assembled party, and the proceedings are at an end. For a woman or child, or any but the elect, even accidentally, to witness this ceremony, the penalty is death.

#### THE CEREMONIAL DRINKING OF NATIVE BEER (N'JÓHI) AFTER SACRIFICE TO GOD (N'GAÍ)

The correct sequel to the solemn sacrifice to God is a gathering of those concerned two days later for the drinking of n'jóhi; this also is a religious rite. The intervening day is occupied by the manufacture of the drink. When, in response to a summons, I<sup>1</sup> arrived at the homestead of Mungé, I found the company already gathered inside one of the huts, and some of the women of the establishment assembled outside under the eaves. Only the faintest glimmerings of light penetrated within the hut, and it was barely possible to distinguish, even in outline, the circle of worshippers. Perfect silence and order reigned, while out of the darkness one voice after another arose in prayer. Amongst those who took part were Mungé, the headman of the N'jáma, and one of the Kiáma. The company responded at intervals, "N'gá-na"

<sup>1</sup> K. R. My husband was unfortunately obliged to be absent from the camp, and I was therefore the only white participant, being made in all respects welcome.

(Amen), and "Sà-i! Sà-i!" (Hear, hear!). The gathering in this way resembled precisely a dissenting prayer-meeting. The n'jóhi, contained in a metal cup, was passed around, given to me to drink, and to my Kikúyu attendant, and sent to the women without.

At this stage we all adjourned outside and sat under the shade of another hut in the compound; there were then present six N'jáma, two Kiáma, one Moran'ja, the chieftain Mungé, and myself. It was not apparently necessary that the persons participating in this service should be absolutely identical with those who had taken part in the sacrifice two days before. The leader of the N'jáma poured out a drink offering, uttering a prayer, and letting a little of the liquor fall on the ground at the end of each sentence. More n'jóhi was drunk; the wives were called up, and I was specially requested to perform the office of passing it to them. The vessel used for the liquor was first a horn and secondly a gourd.

The prayers were, I was told, all to the same effect. "That the clouds may give much rain, that our wives may be fruitful, and no sickness may come near our children; that our herds may wax fat and increase, and that our goods may be many." The same blessings were then courteously requested for the white man and his wife, and, with a perception of the situation which was almost pathetic, the petition added, "that the servants which they shall take unto them shall be filled with intelligence." God was reminded that He had been given a sheep two days ago, and asked to grant these requests.

## SNAKE WORSHIP

In addition to what may be described as orthodox religion, there exist over many parts of German and British East Africa local societies of a semi secret character. Little is known with regard to their rites and ceremonies, but it is certain that they have one point in common namely, the worship of the snake. In Karuri's country there are two such societies. It has been estimated that about half of the population are adherents of this cult, which is known as *Ai twika*. Any outsider treating the subject with disrespect is obliged to forfeit a sheep in default of which he is severely beaten and his house burnt.

The worship of the snake has been twice celebrated by a great festival during the generation which is now in middle life and known as *M wan gi*<sup>1</sup>. The first festival was held in 1891. Preparation began for the second festival in September 1903. Houses of the ordinary description were built for the instruction of the neophytes in all directions around the homestead of the chieftainess *Wan'go*. The preparations took two years. Every hut was in charge of a senior, whose duty it was to instruct the neophytes in the mysteries. In each of these temples were two horns, which must be those of the animal *N'don go ru*. One of these horns was used daily during the two years' course of instruction, the other horn was reserved for the final festival. Some portion of every hut was sacred and any one inadvertently touching it was fined. The part considered sacred was changed from time to time.

The snake, which is known as *N'da ma thi a* lives in the

Ma thi-oy-a River, and is described as "very big and long" It is in charge of a man named Mu-thá-ka At the time of the festival oxen, sheep, and honey are brought to him, every little district providing its share. A portion of these are dedicated to the snake, the rest is reserved by the custodian for his own use The honey is made into beer

On the day of the sacrifice all of the generation younger than the M'wan'-gi, i.e. the Mu-i-run'-gu, stay in their houses They must not look on their seniors Should a Murun'gu accidentally meet a M'wan'gi, he must instantly flee from him and hide A procession is formed to the abode of the snake The sacrifice, which consists of meat, bananas, beer, etc., is placed in a goat trough,<sup>1</sup> and sent out on to the water The horns are blown when the snake is visible, and again when he has finished feeding Those who blow the horns and feed him are held from behind to prevent their running away As soon as the snake has become intoxicated, one man pulls out its hairs (*sic*) these are used as charms The ceremony concludes with singing Secrecy is maintained, "because they say if we tell any man one word (about this affair) dying we will surely die"

The festival seems to be associated with the rainy season and appearance of the rainbow It is considered to ensure plentiful rain, and to protect from various ills The connection existing in the native mind between the rainbow and a snake is shown in various folk tales<sup>2</sup>

Such is the information, for which we are primarily indebted to Mr McGregor, which we were able to obtain with regard to the worship of the snake It would no doubt be possible by residing in the neighbourhood of the sacred snake itself, by becoming acquainted with those concerned, and by judicious inquiry, to discover much more This was in our own case impossible

<sup>1</sup> Pl xl v p. 66a

<sup>2</sup> P 307

## CONCEPTION OF THE SOUL

THE Akikúyu have a conception, vague but nevertheless existent, of spirit as distinct from body, and a personal survival after death. Dr. Tylor<sup>1</sup> has felt it well to point out at some length that Europeans are apt to fall into error in too readily assuming that natives are without such ideas, while the fact may be that they have not grasped the object at which their interrogator is aiming. Our own experience was so much in point that it may be worth quoting. One of us had been talking as simply as possible to one of our retainers of what white men thought of a future existence, with the object, if possible, of eliciting his own views on the subject, but was met with bewildered astonishment on the part of our Kikúyu friend. "How could a man," he asked, "live with God if he was dead, and his body in the grave?" The conclusion was jumped to that there was no answering chord to strike. The same boy afterwards gave considerable information about the habits of N'gó-ma, or the spirits of the dead. The right phraseology had not been hit upon.

To the Akikúyu the soul in life is the N'gor'ó, or ego; it is the expression of a man's individuality, the breath of life. It is also used as spirit, and in a metaphorical sense as heart. Hence it is also applied to the will; if a man suddenly stabs another on the road, it is said that "it is his N'gor'ó which goes bad." The N'gor'ó ceases to exist with the demise of the body, but it does not, according to Kikúyu ideas, depart

<sup>1</sup> See *Prim. Cult.*, vol. 1 p. 418, ed. 1903.  
23

during sleep nor trances, nor can it leave the body during sickness before the moment of death.

A man's spirit after death is termed N'góma. Mr. McGregor considered that on the disintegration of the body the N'góma is set free. According to our information it is not till a man's death that the N'góma comes into being. In reply to a question, "Where is my N'góma now?" the answer was received, "It does not exist."

N'góma wander about, but especially affect the locality of a man's death, for instance, his hut, which is peculiarly unlucky to relatives. "You can hear the spirits," was one account; "they come together from different places, and dance in the wilds and make a noise." According to another account, "Spirits make a whirring sound, they do not say words." A man's widow may be ill, and the Medicine-Man says it is because the spirit needs the sacrifice of a sheep. Again, "The spirit of a dead man comes and talks to a man, say like me, and tells him that one wife has taken another wife's shamba." Asked, "Do you ever see the spirits?" "No, they are like God." Spirits cannot, in the Kikúyu mind, be beaten, shut up and let out of holes, though such ideas exist at the coast. N'góma may be bad or may be of neutral calibre, neither definitely good nor bad, but there is not necessarily any idea of future reward or punishment apportioned for conduct in this life. If a man has been bad during his life his N'góma wanders about after death, doing harm, possessing living persons, and requiring offerings to keep it quiet. Men fight shy of a bad man's hut and fields after his death; otherwise there is, it was said, no difference between the state of the good and bad. It seems to be thought that the rich will be better off than the poor after death, but it could not be explained how or why. There is no glorification of the warrior as among the Masái.

Almost every disease is caused by the action of a dis-

satisfied or malignant spirit; they act from without, but can also possess a man. The spirit of a father, it was explained, who had died at Nairobi, might enter into a child at Nyeri. The Medicine-Man is called in, and interprets the spirit's desires—usually the need of an offering of fat. If the spirit of the departed is not satisfied, he will torment at night, with strange noises, him whose duty it is to make sacrifice, and will eventually drive him mad. The spirit of a murdered man needs particular consideration in these matters.

Drink-offerings are made to the N'góna as well as to N'gai. It is a little difficult at times to say for whom such sacrifices are intended. Possibly the distinction is not always clear to the worshippers. Just, however, as we say Grace before meals, a well-brought-up M'kikúyu spills a little of his drink before he takes any himself. It is interesting to compare this with the custom referred to by Omar Khayyám when he says :

“And not a drop that from our cup we throw  
For earth to drink of, but may steal below  
To quench the fire of anguish in some eye  
There hidden—far beneath, and long ago”

The N'góna is also at times invoked to work mischief. Thus the father of a boy who had become Christian, and who refused to conform to the rite of circumcision, declared his intention of going and sacrificing to the spirit, that his son might go and die immediately. There is also a modified belief in the transmigration of souls, for, in addition to the spirits which move about freely, there are some which have passed into particular forms of animal life. Amongst these is a certain caterpillar, “ta-tu,” and if one appears in the house it is said that “an N'góna has come.” A ta-tu caterpillar once crawled into the tent, a fat green object of about two inches long. There was such great energy shown on the part

of the natives in immediately getting rid of it, that unfortunately we failed to secure the specimen

Hyenas also contain N'goma. If one of them comes inside the homestead and drops excrement, three or four of the Kiama of the district are sent for. They kill a goat, mix its excrement with that of the hyena, and remove them both. The N'goma also reside in the hun gu or kite, and in each and every one of these birds is a spirit. Asked what would happen if one of them was killed, confidence seemed to exist that there were plenty more into which the spirit could go. There are also superstitions connected with the mongoose. According to some accounts this contains a spirit, according to others it does not, but means instead good luck, and that much food will come the way of the traveller who meets one. If a snake appears in fields it is unlucky, and if one of any size crosses a man's path on a journey, he will go back.

N'goma reside in the sacred Mu gú mu tree. Such is often situated at a ford, and before crossing the river a handful of grass should be placed in some crevice in its trunk, and a little food and drink should be thrown on the ground before crossing a bridge. When passing an elephant's skull a handful of leaves should be crammed into it.

N'goma of some description can also inhabit a house. Such a spirit dwells in the fire, his eye is all seeing, and he observes each good and bad act. If a man enters an empty hut in order to steal, the N'goma will spring out of the fire and suffocate him by placing his hand over his mouth and nostrils, and the returning owner will find the would be thief dead on the floor. Retribution can only be avoided by seizing a sheep, splitting its chest open, and pouring out its blood. A spirit or spirits are also said to administer justice with regard to another species of crime. The N'goma may see the deed, and the offender become sick and die.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See p 270



Whether all these last forms of N'góna are definitely connected in the native mind with the ghosts of the dead, I am unable to say.

While some of the spirits of the departed move about freely, and others have passed into animals, or possibly elsewhere, there is also a dwelling-place of the dead, *Mi-i-rí-nyá* *Mi-kon gó-i*. According to the description of one informant it resembles Hades in being the abode of the departed, irrespective of moral or other considerations. It is more especially looked upon as the residence of the dead of bygone generations, and is a place from which spirits cannot emerge, and where it is dark, but nothing more could be extracted from this man about its locality or condition. The question, "When I die, shall I go to *Mi-i-rí-nyá* *Mi-kon-go*?" was answered in the affirmative, but no information could be gathered as to whether that would or would not be immediately after death. Further questions elicited the very pertinent reply, "How can I, a living man, tell you about the dead?"

The following account was, however, given by one of our native friends during a late vigil round the camp fire. It shows not only the belief in an under-world, but that by some, at any rate, the spirits who dwell there are considered to be of a character other than beneficent. The conversation dates from pre-missionary days. "There is," this young man said, "no God of evil, but there is a dwelling place where live a vast number of bad spirits, men, women, and children. These possess many cattle, sheep, and goats. It is terribly cold there, and its inhabitants have no clothes except a scrap of skin the size of the palm of the hand, which they place over their faces when they sleep. To approach a fire is for them an absolute impossibility." These assertions he supported by the following somewhat singular tale —

"A friend of my brother's was once keeping guard at night over his crops of maize which were then almost ripe. He was

armed as usual with a spear and sword At one o'clock in the morning he saw a porcupine doing terrible damage He threw his spear from a distance and transfixed it The porcupine retreated into the high grass and the man pursued it, for his spear remained in the animal The porcupine went down a big burrow, and he followed The burrow extended an immense length Eventually it opened out, and the man found himself among the bad people, men, women, and children They were in number like the grass He also saw many cattle, goats, and sheep, but it was very cold The bad people said to him, "Why have you come here?" and they seized him, and bound his arms and kept him many years One day, however, he saw a great hole at the foot of a big tree, so he made an excuse to retire, and went under the tree, and jumped into the hole and ran down it The bad people followed him The hole extended for an immense distance, going first up and then down, like a path across a mountainous country The man ran and ran till he came to a fire, and then the bad people could not seize him So he came back to the place where my brother lives And all the people came together, and he told them all these things that had happened to him I was then a small boy I saw the man and heard his words Three days from the time when he spoke he was dead "

It will be observed that in the first of the recorded folk tales the heroine also descends to the nether<sup>1</sup> world<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 237

## MORALS

WHILE it has been seen that the Akikúyu do not always consider that existence after death can be affected by behaviour in this life, it would be an entire error to suppose that they have no standard of conduct. They have, on the contrary, a very definite traditional code of morals inculcated by authority. This is shown by the following, received from three different Kikúyu sources. "God lives on Kénia. He says, 'Thou shalt not strike thy father, thou shalt not strike thy mother.' These words were not said by the Medicine-Man, they were said by God a long time ago, my father told me. I was taught by my father not to steal, and his father before had taught him; but some people have not been taught by God, and for them it is not wrong to steal." The next testimony is to the same effect, "God said, 'Thou shalt not kill a man with a spear.' He said to children like this boy (a child of some twelve years), 'Don't disobey your mother.' He said, 'Don't steal; don't say, I would like some one else's things, like this tent; nor some one else's wife, like you; that is very bad.'" Question, "Do the missionaries say all this?" Answer, "They say half, but their words are words of foolishness. These are the words my father taught me." The third code is short and to the point, though the authority given is somewhat different. "Do not kill, do not steal, do not take food out of other people's fields. These are not the words of God, they are the words of the old men." The prohibition to kill must be taken with reservations. The M'kikúyu just quoted gave it as his opinion that it would be wrong to

murder a guest if he were of his own tribe, but not if he were a stranger. On the other hand, if any stranger is attacked in your house, then his quarrel becomes your quarrel.

The injunction not to steal is obeyed, and the Akikuyu are as a nation particularly honest. The duty of respect for seniors is also very fully regarded.

With regard to other virtues not in the accompanying list, Truth telling is not necessarily looked upon as an obligation.

The virtue of Hospitality is practised as a duty, or by force of custom in the case of immediate relatives and clansmen, anything beyond this is a matter of expediency only.

Europeans frequently comment on the generosity shown by the Akikuyu as compared with other African tribes in the supplies of food voluntarily brought into the travellers' camp. This custom rises from mutual convenience and the man who accepts such gifts to-day in a strange country would be expected to acknowledge the obligation in kind when his host returned the visit.

The practice in Kikuyu, amongst friends, is that when a rich man who is on a journey puts up for the night at the homestead of another wealthy person, his host gives him a hut, a fat sheep to kill for himself, another for his retainers and a quantity of gruel and vegetable foods. For a chief to fail to send a sheep as a present to a passing stranger of importance would be tantamount to an open expression of hostility. A portion of the meat of the sheep, that is killed for his own use, the visitor should return to the donor, for the latter's own evening meal. Its skin he must send to the mother of his host; the messenger too is somebody of importance, or he would not have been sent. He should have a small piece of meat given to him. This etiquette Europeans will do well to bear in mind.

The visitor when leaving is not expected to make any return for the entertainment afforded to him and his men.

but when his host of to-day presently comes to his dwelling, custom requires, as has been said, that he shall not be less generous. A well-ordered head residence, or camp, of a European ought always to have ready a guest hut, with a supply of firewood and cooking pots belonging to it, in order to be able to provide for the comfort of any native visitor of importance, in a dignified fashion, by merely giving a few words of direction. Natives notice these little things. Those who receive hospitality from natives, whether travellers or officials, and who are not likely to have an opportunity of returning it, should, of course, at once discharge the obligation in either money or goods, otherwise visits, and more especially the constant visits of officials, become very onerous.

When asking a favour of any kind, a present, however trifling, is sent. So, too, when sending a message, it is considered gracious to accompany it with some little gift.

The Akikúyu, however, acknowledge no moral or customary obligation to befriend the poor or the stranger, or to protect the life and property of the guest, except under circumstances to which allusion has been made. *Xapitas* is a word the signification of which is unknown to the black, and too frequently also to the white in British East Africa. To the M'kikúyu the fact that the stranger has eaten his food and is sleeping in his hut is no sufficient reason why he should not murder him, if for any reason such a course seems desirable. Conversely, the stranger who has sought and been accorded hospitality feels himself under no moral obligation to refrain from treacherously taking the life of his host.

Most callous instances may be witnessed of refusal of hospitality where it is not enforced by custom, and where there is nothing to be gained from its exercise. One of us came across a man, old, poor, and ill, sitting in the wilds by a little fire, which he had approached so near in the endeavour to keep himself warm that he had burned himself most terribly.

His back was placed in a hollow tree to guard, if possible, from the attacks of the hyenas, a calabash of water was near him, but no food. The natives, when remonstrated with, replied, that "the man was a stranger, and that he could do nothing for them, either of good or harm." A similar case also occurred at Nyeri, where an old woman was allowed to starve to death because she was old, friendless, and a stranger. It must be borne in mind, as some measure of excuse, that there is a great horror of the defilement which occurs through death in a hut, and that the fear exists in such cases of being accused of poison.

Bravery is not esteemed in the same manner as amongst some other tribes.

Cases of Suicide occur, though not frequently, the Medicine-Man being the usual refuge in distress. It will be noticed in one of the folk tales that the hero kills himself when his supernatural benefactor is slain.<sup>1</sup> The causes are generally poverty, or desertion by friends; the methods are hanging, drowning, and stabbing. The practice is, however, regarded as reprehensible, "very bad." If a man saw his friend hanging he would cut him down, but instances might occur where a man who had done wrong would be poisoned by his friends, acting without his consent, rather than he should be punished by others.

An instance is given in the *Church Missionary Review* for 1906 in which both parents endeavoured to commit suicide when their eldest son refused to conform to tribal practices. The father tried to stab himself and the mother twice attempted to kill herself by hanging.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 320.



A MEDICINE MAN

The taking of a cl arm for protection from lions (see p 260)

## THE MEDICINE-MAN

THE Mun'-du Mú-gu, or Man of God,<sup>1</sup> combining as he does in his own person the functions of magician, medical practitioner, prophet, and in some sense priest, is a personage who enters largely into Kikúyu life. By his peculiar knowledge he can ascertain the decrees of destiny, and advise how they may best be deflected. He has the gift of second sight, and is warned in dreams of events about to take place. He is competent to explain the causes of all misfortune, particularly in regard to matters whereby the anger of the spirits has been roused, and he alone can prescribe the rites requisite to appease it. Nevertheless, the M'kíkúyu cannot be said to be priest-ridden, for he seeks the aid of the Medicine-Man of his own accord. To him he certainly turns in most troubles which beset him in this present life, but he does not regard him as an intermediary between God and man, whose agency is essential if happiness after death is to be attained.

A Medicine-Man is not a public officer, nor does he occupy an official position connected with his special gifts. At public deliberations and ceremonies he will, of course, generally be found; but only on the ground that he is a duly qualified elder. When he appears at such in the capacity of a prophet, he does so either of his own initiative, or in compliance with a generally expressed sentiment that divine direction should be obtained in reference to the subject in hand.

Every valley or petty district has its Medicine-Man. At a guess we may say that these "doctors," to use the expression

<sup>1</sup> Mr. McGregor tells me that the literal translation of Mun-du Mu gu is "a clever man."

Ogi, abstract noun = cuteness, cleverness.

Mundu Mugi or Mundu Mogi = a clever man, a skilful man, a wise man

This, however, to my mind, scarcely represents the idea conveyed. The word Mogu is used in connection with the tree that is held sacred—Mutu Mugu



in the widest sense of the word, represent about five per thousand of the total population

The reputation and prestige enjoyed by different Medicine-Men varies greatly, but the sum of their individual and collective powers in the land is very great. No man otherwise than intelligent would attempt to enter the profession, and if he did he would be refused.

The calling is not necessarily a hereditary one, nor does it seem to be associated with the accumulation of great wealth, influence and a substantial competency appear to be its general reward. The expense to an M'kikuyu of medical treatment is great, but this results from the number of goats required to be slain as much as from the fee demanded by the practitioner. In one case the Medicine-Man directed that three goats should be killed, but refused a fee as "the patient would not recover."

The Medicine Man is essentially a specialist, not however in a disease, but in a medicine for a disease. Certain men deal in certain medicines. Kikuyu custom is not to buy a practice but to pay a professional brother a price for the privilege of acquiring his knowledge of the rites and materials requisite for the working of a particular charm. Certain medicines are sometimes, however, heirlooms, and where this is the case the family concerned may often be found to have risen to wealth and influence. Ra zi mi, the father of the chief named N'du i mi, himself one of the profession, stated that his clan possessed a medicine known only to him and to one other old man, a relation. This charm afforded protection from lions and from harm in war. The object of other medicines is scarcely so innocent, these are dealt with under Witchcraft.

It is difficult for us to realise the mental attitude of these soothsayers, but my impression of them, derived from many talks, and from having been present at various ceremonies, is that they act in good faith, fully believing in the efficacy of their rites and medicines. The simple native mind does not

trouble itself with theological reasoning It is the ritual, and the act of worship, which appeal to it, the form of the prayer that to it seems essential Beyond that it does not go

## THE INITIATION OF THE MEDICINE-MAN

The Akikuyu say, in reply to inquiries, for otherwise these matters are never alluded to, that the Man of God becomes such in obedience to a direct "call" One Mun'-du Mu gu informed us that when he was a young man he had been taken ill, and that the Medicine-Man, then called in to treat him, had said that he saw that something in his patient which indicated that he too was destined to become a Medicine-Man

Usually, however, there is neither previous training nor prompting from without We were told by laymen that he that is called finds that God (N'gai) makes him dream, time after time, that he is a Mun' du Mu gu he has visions of people coming to him leading a goat for sacrifice he has revealed to him in sleep events that presently come to pass, such as the murder of a man or the drowning of an ox As one old man said, in reply to the question as to whether the profession was hereditary or not, "A father may teach, but it is God who chooses the Medicine Man He talks to him in the night it comes into his head"

Eventually he imparts these premonitions to his wife and friends, and all men see that God has marked him out Should he resist the call, God becomes angry, and sends him misfortunes as a punishment for contumacy the children and goats die, and the inhabitants of the village become ill His friends and neighbours are therefore prepared to hear that he is taking steps to be received

The first step of the candidate, who is probably a man in late middle life, is to spend a night alone in the woods, a thing no M'ikuyu does willingly He then returns to his house and takes a he-goat (n'sen' gi) and goes to the homestead of

the old prophet in whose hands he has decided to place himself. The occasion requires that the he goat shall be either all black or all white. One single white hair or one single black hair, according to the case, would render the creature blemished. To pluck out any hairs that disqualify the animal would be impious. The goat, too, must not have been a member of the flock of the postulant. It must either have been given to him by friends or purchased by him of strangers. Such is the animal he brings to his sponsor for approval, who then says, "Go away, and return the day after to-morrow." When he has gone, the prophet goes into the fallow land, that is, into the "portion of the goats," and selects a special kind of bush. He cuts this down and from it he takes a small piece—a bit of the root, or a bit of the trunk, and brings the morsel home. This mystic piece is eventually given to the neophyte in the course of his initiation, and will be found when he is dead on the site of his down thrown hut.

On the day appointed the future Medicine-Man goes to the home of his Mentor. There are assembled all his friends and relations, the population generally, and in particular the whole body of Medicine Men of the district. His wife has prepared a large supply of drink (n'johi), his closest friends bring presents of skins of sheep and goats, and all bring gifts of food of different sorts, and of the universal beverage called mu thor' a, a form of watery gruel. For the admission of a man into the fold of the initiate is made the occasion of a popular festival.

His initiation into the mysteries associated with certain medicines, and into the art of divination by numbers, is a public ceremony.

Early in the proceedings he takes the flawless goat into his bosom, and wades into shallow water accompanied by a small boy. Then, resting on the goat, and with his head entirely under water, he grasps two handfuls of stones. These stones form the nucleus of a collection of counters (m bô-gu, literally "seeds") that are kept in his lot gourd (m'wá no).

Emerging from the river, he makes his way back to the village. In so doing it is arranged that he shall pass a tree of the kind known as *m'li-gé-ri*. Going up to the foot of it, he takes the right leg of the goat in his hand and, with the hoof, scrapes the trunk of the tree. This is then cut down by the assembled doctors, and a small piece placed in the neophyte's *m'wá-no*.

Arrived at the homestead of his tutor, the future doctor is handed five gourds (*m'boó-thu*), straight and narrow like a cucumber, every one about ten inches long. They each contain a different drug. They are stoppered with banana leaves for the present.

The first gourd contains *ru-sú-lu*. This medicine is essential for ceremonial purification, after defilement due to being cursed by others. By partaking of it strangers are disposed in your favour. Your words are listened to. A little is placed on the tip of the tongue, and also inside the ear.

The second gourd contains *gon'-du*, a cure for sterility.

The third gourd contains *u'-mu*, an antidote for poison.

The fourth gourd contains *u'-then'-gi* (?)

The fifth gourd contains *i'-ra*, a white powder like precipitated chalk. It is employed to mark different specific points on the body in many Kikúyu ceremonies.<sup>1</sup>

He is also given by his tutor the *m'wá-no*, or lot-gourd. This is about fifteen inches high, as thick round as the upper arm, with a graceful narrow neck in its upper five inches.

In the presence of all the Faculty he is formally instructed, and the populace and friends, at a respectful distance, watch the proceedings.

The he-goat is now killed. It is first suffocated, then its throat is cut and the blood collected into a calabash, whence presently it is poured into the stomach, which, with the rest

<sup>1</sup> "It is a diatomaceous earth mixed with a large amount of the carbonates of lime and magnesia. Pure diatomaceous earth consists of the skeletons of small organisms called diatoms."—Report by Mr W F P M'L ntock, Assistant Curator, Geological Museum, 9th June 1903, on specimen submitted to him

of the flesh, is partially cooked on a large grid of green sticks, which is arranged over a mass of glowing embers<sup>1</sup> The half-cooked meat is partaken of by the Medicine-Men Collars made of the skin of the *right* leg of the goat are placed around the necks of the five medicine gourds, and around that of the lot-gourd

I once went to the late home of a deceased Medicine Man The spot had been deserted and the hut intentionally thrown down, but there, placed beside it, were his medicine gourds, with their cowtail stoppers, and his lot-gourd with its leather cap, and varied contents, each with its mystic collar of goat skin around the neck

The Medicine-Men present have brought their lot gourds Each empties his m'wa-no on a skin apart from his fellows The neophyte then comes and grasps a handful from one pile His wife follows him and does likewise With the two handfuls of counters thus obtained lots are cast to foretell his professional career Finally, the contents so grasped are added to those already in the neophyte's m'wá no

Custom requires that the medicine gourds and the lot-gourd of the newly received Medicine-Man shall at first be stoppered with banana leaves, but next day, or later, he replaces them with tips of cows' tails (*ge chu si*) The long hair of these form brushes for the application of the medicines, when it is impossible to obtain the correct plants to form brushes with A curse has to be *brushed* off

The old practitioner—the guide, philosopher, and friend of our newly received Mun'-du Mú gu—receives nine skins of goat or sheep and one female sheep, for his services Each other practitioner present has one skin given to him

Irregular practitioners are poisoned

The foregoing account was given to me<sup>1</sup> by a Medicine Man in the neighbourhood of the chief Wombúgu, on the Gour'-ri River in 1908, and was confirmed from other sources I have

<sup>1</sup> A full description of the method of preparing a *sacer fice* is given on p. 81

however, never been present at the ceremony of the initiation of a Mun'-du Mú-gu.

## AVOCATIONS OF THE MEDICINE-MAN

The status and functions of Medicine-Men vary. A few aspire to a position which is transcendental and of peculiar authority. A Medicine-Man of special pre-eminence may be at times translated bodily, returning subsequently to earth. The information now given is reproduced in the form it was received. "If a man is a great Medicine-Man, God takes him up and he is not on earth, and sees God, and, after a few days, comes back. There was one such who lived near Mungé's. He went away for two or three days and was with God, but no one asked him what God said to him ; they would be afraid."

The following is from another source and district. "One man was on his bed. God came down like a wind" (illustrating by gesture) "and took him up, and he saw God and heard his words. He died when I" (the speaker) "was a child. God gave him some corn in a gourd and told him to plant it ; he told the Akikúyu not to fight, and to live in peace." Whom were they not to fight : one another or the Masaí ? "The Masaí. He said that a plague of insects would come, and it did."

In the Fort Smith district before 1897, a native prophet named Ki-shú-ro went away with a friend to sleep in a native hut ; it was given out that he went up through a hole in the roof and came back in three days' time in a thunder-clap, with stripes on his back.

In the *Mo-tú-mo* district, a little prior to 1898, a woman, Nya-kai-ro, giving herself out to be the wife of God, was also said to have been translated

Both of these persons founded cults which lasted for about ten years. They taught no distinctive doctrines.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. S. R.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Mr McGregor, C.M.S., for these two instances

Such men as these are, however, the exceptions. The usual avocations of a Medicine-Man may be—for want of a better classification—placed under three heads:—

(a) He is able to purify from ceremonial defilement.

(b) He has the power of divination through the casting of lots.

(c) He can influence events by the manufacture of charms, which either protect from evil or bring it about.

In addition to and combined with the above he practises as an ordinary medical man.

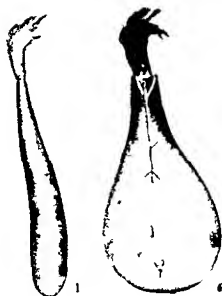
#### (a) CEREMONIAL PURIFICATION

The Akikúyu have little or no conception of sin in our sense of the word. They have a moral code, but impurity is incurred, not by its transgression, but through certain acts or accidents, some of them inevitable in the ordinary course of nature. The ideas connected with this ceremonial uncleanness are familiar to all readers of Leviticus. Defilement may also be brought about by means of witchcraft, or by defiance of a parent's dying instructions. Where such defilement has resulted, purification is necessary, either of the person or of the homestead, or of both. For this, in the graver instances, it is necessary to secure the services of the Medicine-Man, and it is in his character of a cleanser from sin that his priestly character in some sense appears. But even in this department some of the lesser and more ordinary cases needing purification can be properly dealt with, not only by the Medicine-Man, but by the elders.

Thá-hu, or ceremonial uncleanness,<sup>1</sup> is incurred under the following circumstances:—

1. By stepping over a corpse.
2. By touching a corpse.

<sup>1</sup> The word thá hu is used for ceremonial uncleanness and for illness resulting therefrom. It is not apparently employed in any other sense.

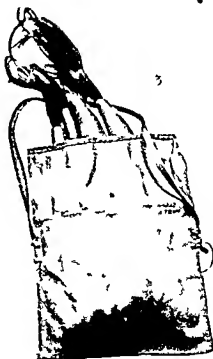


"MEDICINE"  
GOURDS

1 A long narrow gourd with a stopper formed from a cow's tail. The "medicine" contained in it would be some form of dry powder.

2 A gourd of different shape similarly stoppered. This is the Lot Gourd. It contains a variety of pebbles, seeds, and various small objects which are used as counters.

3 The leather bag in which the medicine gourds are generally carried from place to place.





3. By stepping on the skull or bones of a relative.
4. By digging a grave.
5. By touching poison (*u-ró-gi*).
6. By stealing from a medicine-protected garden.
7. By eating food from a cracked pot or food cooked in one.
8. By eating food from a pot into which a woman's bead has fallen.
9. By eating food cooked in a smithy. (Smith exempt.)
10. By eating of a sacrifice when not entitled to do so.
11. By eating forbidden food.
12. By being bespattered by the dropping of a kite.<sup>1</sup>
13. By being touched by the menstrual blood of another.
14. By the entry of a hut by a hyena.
- 15.<sup>1</sup> By the excrement of a hyena being deposited within the enclosure of the hut.
16. By a bedstead breaking with a person on it.
17. By a debilitating and incomprehensible disease.
- 18.<sup>1</sup> By an Elder or an old woman falling down near a hut its owner becomes unclean.
19. By a woman sleeping in her upper garment, when it is inside out.
- 20.<sup>1</sup> By striking a shepherd and drawing blood.<sup>2</sup> The striker must pay the cost of the purification of the flock, namely, one sheep.
- 1.<sup>1</sup> By a shepherd killing a bird or wild animal in the midst of the flock (e.g. by throwing a stick).
- 2.<sup>1</sup> By certain birds (e.g. francolin or kite) perching on sheep or goats, the flock becomes unclean.
- 3.<sup>1</sup> By a hyena seizing a sheep or goat inside the palisade.
4. By being cursed by another

We are indebted for help in the foregoing list of ceremonial fences, and for the following account of the manner of their

<sup>1</sup> Can be purged by an Elder without the intervention of a *Medicino-Man*.

purification, to Dr Crawford of the Kénia Medical Mission. He obtained the information through his native converts.

It is also Tha hu, reports Mr McGregor—

25 To marry a blood relation

26 For a mother to drop her child

27 For a father to carry his son on his back

28 For a dog to die in the country

29 For a man to be bitten by a dog

When defilement has been incurred, the sufferer calls for the Medicine Man. He lifts up his medicines, first towards Mt. Kenya, and secondly towards Mt. Kinangop, and prays for the divine assistance. A goat is then sacrificed, and the contents of the gut and stomach (ta tha) are removed and placed on banana leaves in a hole previously made in the ground. Different medicines are then added and stirred up. Certain shrubs are cut and formed into a broom, which is laid beside the hollow. The Medicine Man then cuts off the foreleg of a sheep and lays it beside the broom. The patient sits on the ground and the operator on a stool.

The broom is then dipped in the offal, the patient opens his mouth, and his tongue is painted by the operator. He is then commanded to "ta hí ka thá hu," vomit the sin. The list of sins which incur defilement is gone through, and after each the patient expectorates in the same manner. When the list is finished, the sheep's foot is dipped in the offal, pushed in the patient's mouth, and he spits out seven times.

The broom is then divided into two parts and both dipped into the offal. The Medicine Man stands up and rubs the patient all over with both bundles, and addressing him, says, "Ni-da nu na thá hu wá ku"—I have purged your sin.

Leaving the patient, the Medicine Man enters the hut, brushes the wall and sweeps the floor of the houses of the patient and of his children. He next sweeps all his refuse

clear of the village, saying, "I drive uncleanness away from this homestead."

He then returns to the enclosure that surrounds the huts, and the patient, or patients if more than one, stands before him. A family group, or two warriors of equal rank, can be treated together. The palms of the hands are extended and i-ra is painted on them in the form of a circle: a bar of it is drawn down the bridge of the nose, whilst a mark is made with it in the supra-sternal notch and above the navel. Medicines are then placed in the palms of the hand and the whole swallowed.

The flesh of the sacrifice is subsequently cooked and eaten by all except the patient himself. If he were to eat any of the meal the defilement would return. The fee, which includes the skin of the sacrificed goat, and value to about half a rupee in addition, is now collected, and the matter is at an end.

Occasionally in different districts a Medicine-Man used to be called in to cleanse me or mine from sin. The following account embodies notes taken on one occasion in the district of Tú-so (December 1907).

The Mun'-du Mú-gu having been summoned by my people, he appeared with his two assistants. I told him that somehow things had gone wrong of late—the goats had gone off their milk; the donkeys had got their backs chafed, etc. etc. Why was it? Had any one made medicine against me? He took the view that such was improbable, and that it was simply a case of personal ceremonial uncleanness that none could foresee. He told me to cheer up, and that he would soon put things right, and forthwith departed to fetch his medicines and assistants. On his return he chose a convenient spot in the camp near to my tent, and proceeded to excavate a hole in the ground the size and shape of a very small hand-basin. His assistants meanwhile went gathering certain plants near by. He then ordered a few banana leaves to be brought to him, and also a calabash of water to be fetched fresh from the

river Clean drinking water already in the camp was refused He then proceeded to line, with a double layer of the green banana leaves, the basin he had previously formed in the ground

Two specimens from each of nine different plants were then handed to him From these he proceeded to make two little besoms, each one about nine inches long One specimen of each of the nine plants was embodied in each brush I was permitted to appropriate specimens of each plant for the herbarium, and he gave me their names as follows —

Mu-há to (*Waltheria Americana*, L.), Mu-hó a (*Pentas sp*), Ru-thí ru, Mu-ché-za, Mu-te-i, Mun do-in'-e, Mu ke ni-na, Mu-zi-ma, Mú-ta

When, for any reason, these particular plants cannot be obtained when wanted, use is made of the cow-tail stopper of the medicine gourds, as previously explained

The basin prepared and the brushes ready, we could now proceed to business From the calabash by his side he poured about a quart of water into the basin Then from his medicine bag he took up a little gourd bottle, removed its cow-tail stopper, and poured a small quantity of what looked like pounded charcoal into the palm of his left hand He then rapidly repeated what appeared to be a set formula of words, and finished by licking up off his hand, and swallowing, a little of the medicine Next he extended his palm to me, squatting on my heels *vis-a-vis* on the other side of the basin, and I had my lick, the balance he then threw on to the surface of the water in the basin betwixt us These proceedings were repeated with the different medicines involved, until I felt convinced that the oft extended palm had become perceptibly cleaner than it was at the beginning This may be said to end the first part of the three of which the ceremony consists

The Mun'-du Mú gu now picked up the two brushes, holding them by the unbound, or sweepy, portion thus leaving

the handles free. With these handles he then stirred the medicines, now floating on the surface, well into the water, and, as he did so, recited the first words of a Litany of Ceremonial Sin, as far as I could gather. Immediately on finishing the last syllables of the passage he leant forward across the basin and pushed one dripping brush-handle into my mouth, with the words, "Spit out your sin." No sooner had I done so than I found the handle of the other brush well between my lips and a similar injunction laid upon me. Again the bowl of medicine was stirred with the two brush handles, again a similar formula dealing with sin No 2 was repeated with the speed and precision of frequent practice, and again with its closing words I found the two brush-handles alternately in my mouth and heard the adjuration to spit. Recollecting the length of the list of the different forms of uncleanness, after a little while I ventured to interrupt the Service and to ask the Mun'-du Mú gu whether, considering I wanted to write notes, it would not be permissible for one of my retainers to take my place. To this no objection was offered, and, the exchange having been made, the Service immediately proceeded as before, till the last sin had been dealt with.

Part III, or that of the Manual Acts, now commenced. Leaning forward, the Mun'-du Mu gu placed the handle of the two brushes against the nape of my neck (i.e. the neck of my sinful retainer), and then vicariously I had to suck them three times, then the handle of one brush was placed in the supraclavicular fossa, whilst the other handle was sucked and the form of spitting gone through. Again a handle was passed under one arm, thus bringing the brush against the back of the body. A sweep was then made downwards, passing over the heels of the squatting figure. Subsequently one handle was placed against the navel and the other handle sucked. Both handles were then crossed behind the right leg, and subsequently behind the left one. The right and left arm were

similarly treated. At each step the person being cleansed spits and repeats the words, "I spit out my sin."

He was then brushed down in front and behind, and subsequently brushed upwards. The Medicine Man wetted his finger with the medicine and stroked the back of the patient's left hand, then the back of the right hand, the back of the left foot, the right foot between the big and first toes, and finally the forehead above the nose. The patient repeated the formula. The white powder (í-ra) was then produced, and drawn down the line of the tibial border of the right leg (with a female it would have been the left leg), then some of it was placed on the left side of the navel, in the sternal notch, and on the tip of the nose.

The tip of the tongue was touched with the í-ra four times, as also afterwards the palms of both the right and left hands, the insides of right and left index fingers, and the balls of the right and left thumbs.

A medicinal plant (n'gor'-du) was placed in the patient's palm, and he was directed to eat it. The sweet lu-thú ko drug was then sifted over the patient, and he was directed to eat it, and the Mun'-du Mú gu was now at last free to carefully raise the banana leaf lining of his bowl containing the brushes, the medicines, and the water defiled by the sin that it had washed off, and to carry it far from the camp to cast it away.

As fixed by custom, the reward of his services was one sheep skin.

The following instance of a purification ceremonial was found in progress near Ny'eri, and observed by us whilst ostensibly taking photographs, as we were strangers to all parties.

A man and his wife were squatting on their heels outside a hut with the Medicine-Man in front of them; a baby was on

the wife's back ; branches of shrubs were on the ground. It was explained to us that the child was ill as the result of the sin of the parents, who had eaten a certain goat in contravention of the instructions given by the father on his deathbed.<sup>1</sup> (It is an ordinary custom for a dying parent to settle by directions that a female animal shall be regarded as sacred, and only its descendants be killed.)

The Medicine-Man dipped a brush on leaves in water contained in half a calabash, and sprinkled round all the patients. He then took the forefoot of a goat, dipped it in the gourd, and put it first in the mouth of the man, and then of the woman, saying the words, "Ta-hí-ka ki-ú-ru" (expel what is bad), and also other words. This he did repeatedly, the patients spitting each time and repeating the formula, "Ta-hí-ka ki-ú-ru."

The Medicine-Man then took í-ra and placed it on the man's sternum, navel, and right foot. With it, too, he touched the corner of the woman's left ear, made a circle round her navel, and a circlet round her ankle.

He swept out the house and touched over the roof with the brush. The man and woman washed themselves with water from the gourd, and the woman washed the baby. They then went into the hut.

#### (b). DIVINATION

It has been seen that some of the most important procedure in the initiation of a Medicine-Man centres round the bestowal of the gourd, and instructions in the manner of obtaining knowledge of the will of the Deity through the casting of lots. This procedure is used more particularly in cases of misfortune or illness, in order to ascertain the cause, which is almost invariably the "work of a spirit," and to prescribe the cure.

<sup>1</sup> This may have been a case of totem, but it did not so appear.

The method employed is for a certain number of persons interested in the event to sit round on the ground, while the Medicine-Man pours out of his gourd at haphazard on to a skin a number of counters, whereupon all present assist to count. The counters are stored first into heaps of ten, these piles are then amalgamated so as to form next twenties, and then fifties. Two fifties are united to make a hundred. The crucial point lies with the odd number left over, when all have as far as possible been sorted in this way. These the practitioner fully considers passing them from one palm to another, and the whole number of the counters are then returned to the gourd. Five is a good number and seven a bad one.

It is stated that in case of illness, if a very bad number is cast, a goat is killed but not eaten, if the patient is very ill indeed, a second goat is killed, and this is consumed by two old men and two old women, as if no one eats, the spirit will not partake of the first goat, which has been killed for its solace. If the sick man is only moderately ill, all eat the goat.

The following instances of divination by lot came under our notice. The first two were seen on different days in the homestead of the chief Wombúgu, it being customary for, a leading man to have his own particular soothsayer, to whom he turns for advice. The Medicine Man and the inquiring parties were assembled on a mat, in the heat of the day, under the shade of one of the huts.

In the first instance Wombugu was the inquiring party, and as such assisted in pouring out the counters, the point at issue was to find out from God whether a man who was sick was going to recover or to die. The result was, according to the Medicine Man, that a goat must be killed, and then the patient would recover.

In the other instance, an old man was the inquirer. He had had it appeared two sons one of whom possessed a shamba which was the envy of his brother. The owner of



the shamba fell ill and died, and the brother took possession. He, however, shortly afterwards also became ill, and the father now sought advice. The oracle declared, by means of lot, that the young man was ill because he had eaten of the food of the shamba which the brother's spirit did not wish him to have, and he must give it up. Later, however, information was brought that the final result of the sitting was that if the patient consumed the medicine of the soothsayer he would recover, without surrendering the coveted plot of ground.

The mother of one of our boys, Lou-bé a, who lived at Ny'eri, being pregnant, had severe pains other than customary, the woman was a Masai, but a Kikuyu Medicine-Man was called in to be consulted. He came and cast the numbers, which said that sacrifice was necessary. The sacrifice was made in Kikuyu fashion. The sheep, which had a white face, was held in front of him, by Lou-bé a, on its hind legs facing the door of the hut, the sacrifice is always thus faced. Lou-bé a's wife held him behind. Lou-bé a said the prayer, "I have taken a sheep, O God, accept the fat, and let none here be ill." The Medicine Man had explicitly stated that the sacrifice must be made and paid for by the eldest son at home and not by the husband. The cost of the treatment involved was as follows: Value of the sheep, Rs 4, fee to Medicine Man, R 1, drink and honey, R 1, total cost, Rs 6, or 7s 6d.

In passing through a village the family was seen engaged in the manufacture of beer. The reason proved to be that there had been great mortality in the flocks of the neighbourhood. The Medicine Man had been consulted, and ascertained, no doubt by casting lots, that the spirit of a man who had lived near and recently died desired a drink offering. A certain amount would be poured out for the spirit, and the rest consumed. On visiting another homestead in the same valley, it was found that there also the sheep had died, and the outpouring of n'johi had already taken place.

In the next example of divination by lot it was possible to observe more carefully, as we ourselves were the inquiring parties. The matter in hand in this case was the foretelling of future events, much after the manner of Bond Street but by lot instead of cards or palmistry.

A shady spot was chosen under big trees near the camp, and a mat placed on the ground. The Medicine Man sat on a stool the others squatted. A small fee in advance was asked for as customary and the present given. He then took from his bag of medicine a calabash containing a white chalk (i ra). It was held aloft and the god of Kénja and Kinangop invoked as follows the mountains being given their Kikuyu names —

‘The sun comes from very far. I ask it to put intelligence into my head and instruct me in affairs. Knowledge comes from Ki lin yá ga or Ny an ðar’ u. I ask it to instruct me.’ A small quantity of the i ra was then shaken into the palm of the soothsayer and the right thumb placed in it and a broad white mark made on the outer angle of the right eye.

The performer being thus consecrated the gourd containing the lots was next dedicated. A daub was placed on its bottom, and a band drawn with the thumb from that spot to the lip of the mouth. The thumb was then passed round the edge of the mouth and finally a broad band was drawn round the inside of the mouth of the vessel with the thumb.

The gourd was then held aloft to each of the four quarters and an invocation uttered. ‘I ask thee O God to enter into conference. I call Thee to witness that I give to the lots no interpretation other than the truth. I ask a clear instruction even as the white band of i ra.’

Counters were then thrown out and counted into heaps. The remainder was three. This was taken to mean that it was all right to proceed with casting lots.

The business of divination proper then began. The Medicine Man having six volunteer assistants a question was

propounded The Medicine Man shook the gourd and told out into the palm of his hand a number of dice, these he divided into two piles, it being explained that one was for the white man and the other for his wife One heap was counted by himself, the other by his assistants The first question was "Should we have good or bad fortune in returning to England?" The numbers were as follows  $300+60+3$ ,  $300+40+1$

In order to make no mistake, the lot was again consulted, and the result of the count was  $700+20+4$ ,  $200+20+6$  The Medicine Man then saw clearly that the white man was going somewhere, but could not say where "He wants to go home, but whether because of wives or war, I do not know" The white woman was asked how many children her mother had borne, whether boys or girls, also, if they were all in England? The dice in her case were interpreted as saying, "That some one had died in her village in the past"

The inquiry being made, "If the white man will live to grow old?" the count was  $100+30+2$  which it was explained was an affirmative answer, the result being apparently arrived at in part by the presence of a cowrie shell amongst the dice poured out The same interrogation being made for the white woman, the answer was again politely in the affirmative, the numbers in this case being  $90+3$

Further information was volunteered that "the white man may commit suicide, but God will not kill him" and that 'the white woman will not have bad luck on the journey, but on arrival will find important business' Other questions and answers were given on the same lines

At the end of the séance the Medicine Man declined to empty the bottle to allow of the counters being examined, without a definite question being asked to justify it

Amongst the dice which were mostly beans or stones, were the following objects with a history and significance Some

of them, as will be seen, are mementoes or thankofferings of important events in the lives of individuals, similar to those which may be seen in churches on the Continent

*A razor or scraper*, meaning go and fight

*The horn of the goat*, whose skin had been put round the neck of the professional bottles

*Piece of wood* from the tree of the Medicine-Man's initiation

*Piece of stick* — A piece of driving stick, with which a young man had brought home an ox carried off in war

*Lion's tooth*, given by a successful hunter, for whom the Medicine Man had previously made medicine If the question at issue in the lot be one of a journey, the appearance of this counter indicates that the traveller will meet a lion

*Woman's ring and piece of Masai sandal strap*, war trophies, indicate proximity of Masai and desirability of hostilities

*Revolver cartridge case* of foreign pattern, with which a European freebooter had shot a M'kikuyu, indicates white men near and hostilities

*Piece of ear ring of dead man*, given by a young man who had slain another in war, indicates "fight and prosper"

*Single courie shell*

*Two courie shells united by gum*, indicate that a woman will bear twins

*An overhand knot of twig* indicates, under certain conditions, that a woman will not bear to any husband, conditions as follows A man has a spite against a woman He has met her on the road and she will not return his salutation, which is bad manners or worse it happens again, and she increases the insult by looking at him with half closed eyes He then goes to her homestead, manages to touch her head, and draws his finger along her garment, removing the nap This he takes to the Medicine Man who puts it in his gourd He makes medicine to "blind" the girl, and the appearance in the lot of this twig signifies as above

## (c) THE MANUFACTURE OF CHARMS

Belief in the efficacy of charms plays an important part in the lives of the Akikúyu, both men and women, few of whom are without half a dozen of such "medicines" attached to the lower border of their broad waist-band, and sealed up in small sheep's horns the size of the end of the thumb. A woman will part with her girdle, but nothing will induce her to part with her medicines which are attached to it. Charms are also used for protective purposes. The charms usually, though not always, require to be made by Medicine-Men.

The following are two instances<sup>1</sup> of their manufacture at our request :—

A typically weird old man came to the camp with his assistant and his small son. He brought his bag of medicines and a calabash strung by four straps and terminating in a single thong; a stool was produced and a mat, on which he spread his bottles. A charm being asked for by the white man to preserve him from attacks of lions, the Medicine-Man at first desired so to arrange its working that the moment the lion saw him it should run away. The customer, however, explained that this would hardly answer the purpose of being able first to obtain a good shot, and the medicine had to be adjusted accordingly. The old man filled the calabash half-full of water, and tipped powder out of each bottle into the palm of his hand. Into this mixture he dipped his finger and drew it across his tongue in the form of a cross; he then put the mixture out of his hand into the water in the calabash, and a portion of it into each of the four divisions made by its four supporting thongs, uttering meanwhile certain formulæ. He

<sup>1</sup> The account of details is unfortunately incomplete, owing to the difficulty of both watching accurately, and at the same time transferring fully to paper the rapid and complicated action of the practitioner

then got up and walked a few yards away, whirling the calabash and its contents round and round his head, as if he were about to sling a stone, and addressing each of the four quarters of heaven

Red powder was taken out of one of the bottles, and with it was touched the crown, ear, elbows, knees, and feet of the applicant, a black powder then followed, and with it were anointed his shoulder, crown, knees, hair, feet, and head. The performer took a quill from a bottle, touched some more powder he had put in his hand, and stirred the brew with the quill, uttering incantations. He then tasted the same powder, putting the quill in his mouth, and put it into the brew in the calabash. The quill was also put in the mouth of the assistant. The quill was waved five times round the patient's head and touched his tongue five times. The performers sipped the brew and spat, stirred the brew with an iron instrument and tasted. The crucible was swung eight times round the patient's head, and he was made to taste the brew and spit once to right and left and once in front, repeating the formula each time. "Bad beasts, do not harm me." He was instructed to swallow a little, and the remainder of the concoction was gulped down with great gusto by one of the native onlookers. Finally some powder was tied up in a little package to be worn

The following charm was worked by another practitioner to defend the white woman from evil —

The Medicine Man appeared with his attendant carrying his stock in trade. The bag containing the bottles was passed nine times round the customer's head from right to left, with the invocation, "All bad things, all bad animals, be bound." The bottles without the bags were then passed six times round in alternate directions, after one of the rounds they were given to the customer to smell, and after another, placed on her lap.

Two powders, red and black, were mixed in the palm of

the hand of the practitioner, and touched on the two eyes, two ears, forehead, and neck of the patient. A black paste was used to anoint the sole of the left foot, knee, elbow, back of neck, and head. A bottle was then passed round her head, and her lips, forehead, front of neck, right elbow, and knee touched with a black powder. Powder from various bottles was put into a cup of water, and she was given it to drink. The bag containing the bottles was passed round her head two or three times in the same manner as previously, but first in one direction and then in another, and the bottles without the bag were also treated in the same manner. The medicine was then sewn up in a small bag the <sup>\*</sup>scam of which was rubbed with white powder and passed round her head and given to her to wear.

It was reassuring to be told that after this no harm could result from an encounter with the Mwe sa ga of Evil Eye.

It is a very usual sight to see a length of wild vine stretched by the owner on high sticks along a boundary. This indicates that medicine has been made for its protection; any one walking underneath the warning cord will be afflicted with pains in the back. One of us passing inadvertently beneath such a charm was made to come back while it was held down to be stepped over.

A skull may also at times be seen on a stick in the middle of a field of ripening crops. No explanation could be gained for this except the brief and conclusive dictum "God likes it!"

The following is an instance of a charm manufactured by the laity, though strengthened and enforced by the profession. "In old days" it was said "if an M'likuyu had seen a man in European dress go through his country he would have killed a goat put the raw fat on his eyes and placed the undigested food from the interior on the path by which he the white man had passed so that he should not again come along it. He

would also have secured medicine from the Medicine Man, that the stranger might return by another road "

Midway between the charms manufactured by the practitioner and the layman is the special curse which a blacksmith attaches to the violator of his property by putting up the nozzles of his bellows on the land in question

The special powers of the tribe M'we sa ga have been alluded to

## WITCHCRAFT

The powers of medicine can be used to harm your neighbour as well as to benefit yourself The Kikuyu word o-ro-gi signifies both poison and witchcraft m'ro-gi is wizard In the following instance the medicine was one of those which, as has been explained, are hereditary in families

When I was leaving for England, a particular friend of mine brought me as a gift being the most valuable thing he could bestow, a small quantity of a certain plant He explained that undoubtedly, during my long absence from home, some of my minor chiefs or headmen in my own country would have been cheating me as regards the increase in the flocks or the ladies of my harem been transgressing the rules of propriety, so that his gift would be the very thing for me "You put a little of it into their gruel There is no pain or vomiting the man gradually becomes more and more indisposed eventually he dies There is no fuss, or scandal, or unpleasantness By it my grandfather came to power by it my father held the position to day we hold our own It is the secret of our family " His father had a great reputation as a Medicine-Man

That many of the Medicine Men are skilled and unscrupulous poisoners I have no doubt, those with whom I have become acquainted always begged me above all things to give



them antidotes to the poisons of rival practitioners. That they themselves did the like they would never admit, though they were prepared to concede the fact that those who defied their medicine, i.e. certain rites and anathemas, sickened and died. But it must not be assumed that because a 'man gradually fades away out and dies after having had "medicine" made against him, he has therefore necessarily been poisoned. The M'kikúyu seems to possess the peculiar faculty of letting himself go until he is absolutely gone. A man will publicly say that he intends to die, and within a few days or weeks he will be dead. He does nothing actively, but simply mopes about for a while, getting weaker and weaker, then lies down and fades out.<sup>1</sup>

While poison plain and simple is, as has been seen, often used, there are other and more subtle methods of injuring an enemy.

Near Tú-su, in the possession of one Dé-gua wa Ki-má-ni, an individual under the jurisdiction of Ka-rú-ri, chief of Tú-su, is an object that no man living has seen, for to look upon it is death. This mysterious something is said to have been passed down from father to son for six generations, namely, from the Ma-tha-thi age.<sup>2</sup> It is known as the Ki-thá-si, or "that which is (or was) seen."<sup>3</sup> Report speaks of it as a stone

<sup>1</sup> As a case in illustration, one of my men told me he had by special circumstances lost his wives and his flocks, and that now he had just heard that his brother was dead, he therefore meant to die too. Had no notice been taken, I have not the least doubt that within a month he would have done so. I, however, formally called him to me and said to him, "I have heard what you have said, your words are the words of a fool. With much trouble I have taught you to grasp intelligence, and now you say you want to die? A spirit not your own has come into you. I say it is to go immediately, and you will be well and happy. If I see you miserable, then it has not gone, and it must be driven out by beatings. Come every day at the third hour and tell me whether you need a beating by the guard." The sufferer replied that, as we were friends, of course he would not die if I objected. The evil spirit left him: the man was a changed being in a few hours. I have no doubt that he owed his life to me.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> We are indebted to Mr. McGregor for first telling us about the existence of the Ki thá-si.

which was found by an ancestor of the present holder, and that in it are fourteen holes, seven on the one side and seven on the other. Now, by the Akikuyu, the number 7, as has been seen, is considered of all the most unlucky, when divination by numbers is sought at the hands of their Medicine-Men. Hence this object, with its two sets of seven holes, naturally lends itself in their imagination to mystic use of an evil character.

On making inquiries discreetly, we little by little learnt that if a man decides to bring ruin, temporal and spiritual utter and complete, on some one else, he would go to the holder and give him a present of seven goats, and arrange for the *Ki-thá-si* to be invoked. In due course the guardian of the awful thing, with the postulant or assistant, would then exhume it and the two of them retire to some solitary spot and "make medicine": i.e. go through certain rites for the space of six days. On the seventh day they would take the *Ki-thá-si* and, avoiding observation, betake themselves in the early morning to a point commanding a view of the victim's homestead.

As Kikuyu is a sea of hills and vales, and it is the custom of the natives to build their groups of huts with the protective enclosure high up on the sides of slopes, there is no difficulty in taking up a position where the homestead with its occupants emerging at dawn to their daily business, can be watched without the observer being seen.

Settling down in a suitable spot, the two men then set up in front of them seven sticks pointed towards the victim's home. The *Ki-thá-si* in its coverings they place behind their backs, and, whilst there so held, it is carefully unwrapped. Then the postulant, inclining one stick in the direction the curse is to fly, with his other hand behind his back touches the unseen thing at two of the holes and formulates in exact words one of the seven curses permitted to him. Generalities are void—each curse must be simple, specific, and direct. Virtue then leaves the *Ki-thá-si*, takes the form indicated in the devotee's

prayer, and flies to its destination in the direction indicated by the stick. Seven times this is repeated, a different stick aligning the flight of each curse. The *Ki tha si* is then again immediately covered up in its wrappings by its awe-struck users, working with their hands behind their backs, for they firmly believe that any accidental glance would mean instant death, and they get them thence.

On the following day (the eighth) a goat is sacrificed, and both men shave their heads. The next they separate, the devotee returning home to await the fulfilment of his anathema, whilst the guardian of the *Ki tha si* proceeds again secretly to bury his heirloom, and to make, no doubt, those little private arrangements that will certainly justify the popular belief in its efficacy. Circumstances prevented my ever getting into touch with the guardian of the *Ki tha si*, though I hinted that I wished to employ it, and discreetly made it known that I was ready to conform, as ever, to all established custom, ritual, and fees. The most, however, I could do was to gather from several different persons scraps of information to the above effect and this is now given for what it may be worth.

Other methods of revenge amongst the *Akikuyu* are as follows. —

A man refused by a girl may get medicine and put it in her food and then no other man will wish to marry her.

To touch with the foot a person of higher rank (*i ki ni a*) is gross disrespect. If as in a hypothetical example given young men are sitting round in a circle and a newly circumcised boy puts his foot on the top of another that of an older man the injured person may procure a hair of the offender put it on grass and take it to the Medicine Man who so deals with it that the intelligence of the boy departs and he wanders about everywhere without work or goods. The insult may, however be expurgated by payment if it has been committed by a child, value would have to be given to the extent of from

two to four rupees; it would not be considered right to work a charm as above against a child. A young man offending against an old man would pay five rupees in compensation, and even where the difference in age was merely between two young men, the younger, if he offended, would make a present for fear of being bewitched.

Again, an object which brings with it a curse, such as a nail of the dead, a herb, etc., may be laid in the path which an enemy is to traverse, and the victim falls ill accordingly. Resource must be had to a beneficent Medicine Man to counteract the charm, who searches in and around the homestead with his horn to find the source of evil, the usual sheep are killed, and the village is ceremonially cleansed. One M'kikuyu in our service asked leave of absence as his wife was very ill, suffering from the effect of a spell placed before the door of her hut. "He would get," he said, "the Medicine Man, who would kill a goat, the 'water inside the goat' would be poured into the gourd of the practitioner and mixed with his medicine the patient would swallow the drink, and so all would be well." The case, however, proving a bad one, poor Kíranjui returned not unnaturally depressed by the expense of the treatment involved. "Five goats," he said, "had had to be slain. The skin of the first was taken to wrap the sufferer in, and, as the mother-in-law had eaten the flesh, it would have been very wrong for the husband to do so. Of the second goat, the fat had been given to God, and the husband had eaten the flesh. The third animal was the fee of the practitioner, the fourth had been slain for the purification, while the fifth had been cut in two parts, the husband had had one half and God the other. An instance<sup>1</sup> of this kind of witchcraft is given under Trial by Ordeal.

The following curious history was told by our Kikuyu boy in the intervals of watching the said trial. "If you think your

<sup>1</sup> p. 213.

friend has died from poison or medicine in the path, you go and watch after his corpse has been put out in the wilds, and the wizard comes and cuts off pieces of his flesh to make medicine. The victim then comes to life. If no one is at hand the wizard will kill him again, but if a friend is there he can seize the murderer and bring the victim home. A friend can get good medicine and apply it to the corpse of one so done to death and put out, and he will then come to life."<sup>1</sup> The difficulty in altogether following this story is to believe that any M'kikúyu would have sufficient devotion or courage to adopt such a thrilling course of procedure.<sup>2</sup>

The following appeared in the *Journal Man*, June 1906, and is reprinted by Mr. Hobley's kind permission:—

*Kikúyu Medicines. By C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.*

*Chembe*.—Made of castor oil, sheep fat, honey, goat milk, water of various streams in Kikúyu, urine of a male and female goat and sheep, magumo wood, the milky sap of wild fig.

If a person has hæmaturia, a little of this medicine placed on the end of the penis cures him. It is also efficacious for a cough.

A little placed on the gate of a cattle boma will prevent thieves entering to steal. If a person is sick unto death and a spot is placed on the forehead, on the tip of the tongue, on the navel, on the buttocks, and on the toes, he will recover. It is also necessary to pass some of the medicine five times round the patient's head as he lies on the ground.

*Kagumo*.—The ashes of the roots of a tree of that name; the tree has milky sap.

If a person faints, a little of this medicine placed on the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tate, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vol. xxxiv. p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. R. R. Marett has been good enough to deal with the place of Kikúyu thought in the comparative study of religion. See Appendix V.

tongue and a spot of it placed on the forehead and on the navel will revive the patient

*Kanuqu* —Made from seeds of a tree of that name

Mixed with hot water it is medicine for a cold in the head

*Kihoko* —Made from ashes of the roots of the Kilinga tree

Medicine to protect cattle

If a little is rubbed on the gate of the cattle boma, or tied on to an animal's tail, and a thief comes to steal the cattle, he will be caught, or if a lion comes to carry off the cattle it will be shot

*Kinoria* —Medicine to make a thin man put on flesh

*Lusulo* —Made from the Muhukura tree

Medicine to call a person If A wishes B to visit him, A eats some of the medicine and calls B B, who may be even at a distance of three days' journey, is obliged to come

*Muchanja Muka* —Made from the leaves of tree of that name

If a person is suffering from a disease called Ngóma, which is apparently a species of temporary madness, a little of this medicine, taken with oil, cures the patient

*Mukosho* —Made from the roots of a tree of that name

If a hunter eats a little of this medicine and rubs a little on each eyelid he quickly finds elephants or what game he wishes It is also said to be a good thing to put a little of the medicine on one's weapons

*Mukuruka* —Made from the bark of a tree of that name

This medicine is put in a half gourd and mixed with water, the gourd is then swung round the head by a string This is taken by warriors during the periodic dances Its object is to induce some particular girl to come to him It is not necessary to call the girl, she is obliged to come

*Mukuyu* —Made from ashes of the roots of a tree of that name

Medicine for gonorrhea

It is not eaten, but a little is applied to the throat, between the toes, navel, buttocks, between the fingers, loins, forehead, and in two days the patient will be cured.

*Mururi*.—From a tree of this name in Kikúyu.

If a little of this medicine is put in a camp fire, no lion or other wild beast will come near to seize the traveller.

*Mwitia*.—Made from the roots of a tree of that name.

If this medicine is rubbed on anything that a person desires to sell a buyer will soon turn up to purchase, and the article or animal will be sold.

*Ngundu*.—Ashes of the bark of a tree of that name.

If a person is suffering from diarrhœa he is to swallow a little and rub a little in a line around his abdomen and the diarrhœa will be cured; it is also good for sickness during pregnancy.

*Omu*.—Made from the roots of a tree called Mtanda Mbogo.

This medicine is given to youths when they are circumcised and they do not feel any pain.

*Siari*.—The ashes of the feathers of the rhinoceros bird.

This is a medicine for impotency in the male or sterility in the female; it is not eaten, but a little is to be rubbed on the pudenda or the penis.

This cannot be dispensed without payment.

*Ira*.—A white earth from Mount Kenia, River Muimbi.

This is applied in each case when a patient has taken any of the other medicines and is recovering, it is supposed to complete the cure. Men apply a spot of this to the nose, throat, tip of the tongue, but women only apply it to the temples on each side of the head.

The above medicines were obtained from Kahiga, a Medicine-Man, or Mundu Mugo, belonging to the Angare or Kahuno clan (Muhirika) of Kikúyu; he belongs to the Tusu district, near Karuris.

## NOTES ON PHARMACY, MEDICINE, AND SURGERY

THOUGH the Akikuyu give definite names, and attribute definite qualities, to a large number of wild plants, no drug, likely to prove of practical importance in Medicine, has as yet been observed by me in use amongst them. They recognise certain plants as yielding emetics, purgatives, astringents, cutaneous irritants, "poisons," or "medicines," i.e. elements required in the making of a charm, but there they stop.

This manufacture of charms is so closely associated in the practice of the Medicine Man with the *bona fide* use of drugs that it is often difficult to differentiate between the two. Surgery is not associated with Medicine. It is practised by any one who is naturally neat-handed, and no doubt such an individual acquires a local reputation.

One of the commonest forms of surgical injury is depressed fracture of the skull, as might be expected in a country where every man and boy carries a "life preserver." For such, surgical treatment is not attempted. No case of bone-setting or reduction of dislocation has been met with. Their surgical practice is confined to dealing with flesh wounds—of these I have seen many successful cases; the failures, however, would not be likely to come under notice. Of common accidents one of the most frequent is the rupture of the lobe of the ear after it has been distended and undergone hypertrophy. In this case the surfaces are freshened up with the knife



and again brought together, when a good union is usually obtained

Sword slashes and spear stabs are sewn up with no regard to drainage, yet they often do extraordinarily well. One or more strong thorns are passed through the skin and muscular tissue well back from the border of the wound, and similarly out through the skin on the opposite side. The path for the thorn is made by means of a sharp iron awl. A stitch of tough vegetable fibre is then passed externally, in the form of a figure of eight, around the projecting extremities of the thorns. The surfaces of the wound are thus brought fairly well together and maintained so. The edges of the skin are then similarly bored with the awl, and brought neatly together by means of a series of closely set separate stitches each tied with a reef knot. Should the patient recover, the result is quite neat.

The key to their success seems to be in the fact that the wound is not closed until hæmorrhage has practically stopped. Wounds with these people seem to heal with extraordinary rapidity, and the absorption of septic matter, to a limited amount, does not appear to produce the constitutional disturbance that arises in the case of the European. They are by nature remarkably deficient in sensibility to pain nor do they experience shock on injury to anything like the same extent that we do.

Dental practice and the details of circumcision have been dealt with elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Circumstances prevented any observations being made regarding obstetric practice.

W S R

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 33, 163.

## PART IV

### FOLK LORE

#### MYTHS

THE following legend is told by the Akikuyu as to their origin and the reason for their agricultural pursuits, as differentiated from those of the Masai and N'dorobo "The Akikuyu are," they say, "the descendants of an old man and his wife, who came to the present Kikuyu country from the other side of the great mountain of Kénia, called by them Kĩ li nyag'-a, or Kĩ re i ra both mean the White Mountain While they were on the slopes of the mountain they were on the point of starvation, and the old man went up the summit to see God (N'gai), who dwells there God on that occasion gave him sheep and goats, and from that gift all the Kikuyu flocks of to day descended God told the old man that his descendants should occupy the present Kikuyu country, and that they should live by tillage, that the Masai should hold the plums, and should have flocks and herds, but that the portion of the N'dorobo should be the wild game of the wilderness, and nought else besides As a memorial of this interview with God, and in accordance with God's command then given, the Akikuyu to this day paint their bodies, for certain great ceremonial dances, with patterns resembling forked lightning " <sup>1</sup>

Another version of the origin of the nation is as follows —  
"Once there was a great hole with water in it, the water

<sup>1</sup> See p. 150  
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was deep in the centre and shallow at the sides. A man and woman lived in the shallow water. Then they came out of the water on to the dry land, and journeyed to the Kikúyu country, which was all forest, and had many children."<sup>1</sup>

No account could be arrived at as to the dwellings of the man and his wife in the water, nor could any legend of a deluge be discovered.

The monthly changes of the moon are accounted for as follows :—

*"The sun is the husband of the moon. When the moon comes to maturity, the sun fights and kills her, and then she rises again. The stars which attend on the moon are the moon's children."*

We are informed that when the moon is "dead," no journeys are undertaken, no sacrifices offered, nor sheep killed, and that, according to current belief, on the day after the death of the moon, which is termed "Mu-tí-ru-m'wé-ri," goats and sheep do not bear.

<sup>1</sup> See also p. 9

## FOLK TALES

(*Sing. Ro-gú-nu, pl. N'gánu*)

THE stories which follow were stated by the narrators to have been told to them as children by their mothers, or by the elders of the tribe; much astonishment<sup>1</sup> was shown that the white woman should care to hear anything so childish. The source from which each tale is derived is prefixed. In two cases the same story was met with again in a different part of the country; in these instances both versions are given, their variations being of some interest.

The not infrequent absence of proper names for the *dramatis personæ* is curious, and at times perplexing, more especially in such a tale as that of the "Four Warriors."

The tales have been transcribed as far as possible exactly as they were narrated. In very rare instances, not more than two or three at most, slight alteration has been made where the language was somewhat primitive for modern taste, but all temptation to embellishment or polish, even when the stories are most inconsequent, has been strenuously resisted. They may therefore be taken, good, bad, or indifferent, as the product of the Kikúyu brain, with this reservation, that they have in reproduction been subjected to a process of double translation. They were either told to me<sup>1</sup> in Swahili by those to whom it was a foreign language, or, when the narrator spoke Kikúyu only, translated into Swahili for my benefit, and in either

case have been of course again translated for the English reader. The descriptive power, which even so, as will be seen, is by no means contemptible, can hardly fail to have suffered in the process.

It has not been without hesitation that these offspring of the African brain are introduced to a northern sphere. Will the reader hear them in imagination as they were told to the writer? Will he picture himself at noontide on some hillside, under the shade of a sacred tree, gazing over the landscape, with its little brown dwellings and ripening crops, away to snowy Kenya, "where God dwells"? Or it may be he is seated in the homestead towards evening, under the eaves of one of those same little brown huts, surrounded by happy mothers and little children, and while some old dame tells the story the flocks come home to be in safe keeping for the night. Best of all, he may form one of the gathering, when tongues are unloosed, round the camp fire after dusk has fallen, the flames light up dark faces, and beyond the circle the boles of great trees are seen in the moonlight, while the mournful howl of the hyena is heard in the distance seeking his gruesome meal. Then as the reader thus lives in spirit amongst the surroundings which gave them birth, he will at least deal tenderly with these romances of nature, these half clad children of a sunnier clime.

## THE TALE OF THE MAIDEN WHO WAS SACRIFICED BY HER KIN, AND WHOM HER LOVER BROUGHT BACK FROM BELOW

*Told by NA-GA-TÚ-U, Mother of one of the herds  
of the Chief N'DU 1 NI*

THE sun was very hot and there was no rain, so the crops died, and hunger was great; and this happened one year, and again it happened a second, and yet a third year the rain failed, so the people all gathered together on the great open space on the hilltop, where they were wont to dance, and said each to the other, "Why does the rain delay in coming?" And they went to the Medicine Man, and they said to him, "Tell us why there is no rain, for our crops have died, and we shall die of hunger?" And he took his gourd and poured out the lot, and thus he did many times, and at last he said, "There is a maiden here who must be bought if rain is to fall, and the maiden is Wan ji ru. The day after to morrow let all of you return to this place, and every one of you from the eldest to the youngest bring with him a goat for the purchase of the maiden."

So the day after the morrow, old men and young men all gathered together, and each brought in his hand a goat. Now they all stood in a circle, and the relations of Wanji ru stood together, and she herself stood in the middle, and as they stood the feet of Wanji ru began to sink into the ground, and she sank to her knees and cried aloud, "I am lost" and her father and mother also cried and said, "We are lost",

it those who looked on pressed close, and placed goats in the keeping of Wanjiru's father and mother. And Wanjiru went lower to her waist, and she cried aloud, "I am lost, but much rain will come", and she sank to her breast but the rain did not come, and she said again, "Much rain will come", then she sank to her neck, and the rain came in great drops, and her people would have rushed forward to save her, but those who stood around pressed into their hands more goats, and they desisted.

So she said, "My people have undone me," and sank to her eyes, and as one after another of her family stepped forward to save her; one of the crowd would give to him or her a goat, and he fell back. And Wanjiru cried aloud for the first time, "I am undone, and my own people have done this thing." And she vanished from sight, and the earth closed over her, and the rain poured down, not, as you sometimes see it, in showers, but in a great deluge, and every one hastened to their own homes.

Now there was a young warrior who loved Wanjiru, and he lamented continually, saying, "Wanjiru is lost, and her own people have done this thing." And he said, "Where has Wanjiru gone? I will go to the same place." So he took his shield, and put in his sword and spear. And he wandered over the country day and night, and at last, as the dusk fell, he came to the spot where Wanjiru had vanished, and he stood where she had stood and, as he stood, his feet began to sink as hers had sunk, and he sank lower and lower till the ground closed over him, and he went by a long road under the earth as Wanjiru had gone, and at length he saw the maiden but, indeed he pitied her sorely, for her state was miserable and her raiment had perished. He said to her, "You were sacrificed to bring the rain, now the rain has come I will take you back." So he took her on his back like a child, and brought her to the road he had traversed and they rose

together to the open air, and their feet stood once more on the ground, and he said, "You shall not return to the house of your people, for they have treated you shamefully." And he bade her wait till nightfall; and when it was dark he took her to the house of his mother, and he asked his mother to leave, and said he had business, and he allowed no one to enter. But his mother said, "Why do you hide this thing from me, seeing I am your mother who bore you?" So he suffered his mother, but he said, "Tell no one that Wanjiru is returned."

So she abode in the house of his mother; and then she and his mother slew goats, and Wanjiru ate the fat and grew strong; and of the skins they made garments for her, so that she was attired most beautifully.

It came to pass that the next day there was a great dance, and her lover went with the throng; but his mother and the girl waited till every one had assembled at the dance, and all the road was empty, and they came out of the house and mingled with the crowd; and the relations saw Wanjiru, and said, "Surely that is Wanjiru whom we had lost"; and they pressed to greet her, but her lover beat them off, for he said, "You sold Wanjiru shamefully." And she returned to his mother's house. But on the fourth day her family again came, and the warrior repented, for he said, "Surely they are her father and her mother and her brothers." So he paid them the purchase-price, and he wedded Wanjiru who had been lost.



## THE STORY OF THE LOST SISTER

THE two tales<sup>1</sup> which follow are clearly varying versions of the same story. They were obtained in different parts of the country, the first from a young man, the second from an old woman. It is somewhat interesting to compare male and female points of view. The boy dwells in detail on the beauty of the hairdressing of the hero, while the woman elaborates sympathetically the straits to which the hero is reduced with regard to his food supply in the absence of the heroine, thus making clear the otherwise pointless ejaculation of the sister in the first version as to the whereabouts of the gruel. The chronology is obviously more probable in the second than in the first story.

### *The Story as told by N'JÁR-GÉ, Son of the Chief MONGÉ*

A long time ago a young warrior and his sister lived together in a hut. They lived alone, for their parents had died when they were children, and the hut stood by itself, there were no other homesteads near. The name of the young man was Wa ga cha ra i bu, and the maiden was called M'wer'-u. Wagacharaibu had beautiful hair which reached to his waist,<sup>1</sup> and all the young women admired him greatly, so that he often went away from home to a long distance to see his friends, and M'wer'u was left quite by herself.

Now one day when he came back after he had been thus away, M'wer'u said to him, "Three men came here last night

<sup>1</sup> See frontispiece also p 26  
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when I was all alone, and each had a club and each had a spear, and if you go away and leave me all alone I know that they will come back and carry me off." But Wagacharaibu only said, "You talk nonsense," and he went away again as before. And the three men came back, as M'wer'u had said, with the three clubs and the three spears, and they took hold of the girl by the neck and by the legs, and they lifted her up and they carried her away. When Wagacharaibu came home again he went to the house and found it quite empty, and as he went he heard a girl's voice crying from the opposite hillside, and the voice was the voice of his sister, and it said, "Wagacharaibu, men have come and carried me away. Go into the hut, you will find the gruel on the stool." And Wagacharaibu cried aloud and said, "Who will shave the front of my head now you are gone, for we have no neighbours?" And he plunged into the grass after M'wer'u, and the farther he went the farther she was carried away from him, and he heard her voice and she heard his voice, but they could not see one another, and he followed and followed for one month, and he became very hungry. And he wore a hat such as men used to wear in the old days, it was a piece of goatskin, and it had two holes cut in it and strings to tie under the chin, and the skin stood out over the forehead so that rain could not touch the face, and you may see such hats even now among the mountains where there are many trees and much rain, and among the Masai. So Wagacharaibu cut a piece of the leather and ate it, for he was very hungry, and he felt strong again, he went on and on a second month, and again a third month, till the hat was all finished, and then he took his garment of skin and he ate that, and so he went on a fourth month and a fifth month, until he had travelled one year and four months, and the cape was finished. Then being again hungry, when he came to a big homestead he went inside, and he

saw a woman cooking food and he begged a little, and she gave him some, but she did not hand it to him in a nice vessel, but in a broken piece of an old pot. And that night he slept there, and the next morning he went out with the little son of the woman to scare the birds from the crops, for the grain was nearly ripe, and he took stones and threw them at the birds and as he threw a stone he would say, "Fly away, fly away, little bird, like M'wer'u has flown away, never to be seen any more." And the little boy listened, and he went home, and when Wagacharaibu was not near, he told his mother the words the stranger had said, but she paid no attention to the tale of her son and did not listen to it, and the next day the same thing happened again, and the third day the woman went herself to the fields and she heard the words of Wagacharaibu, "Fly away, fly away little bird, like M'wer'u has flown away, never to be seen any more," and the woman's name was M'wer'u, and she said, "Why do you say those words to the birds?" And he said, "I once had a sister named M'wer'u, and she was lost, and I have followed her many months and years, but I have never seen her again." And the woman put her hand over her eyes and she wept, for she was indeed his sister, and she said, "Are you truly my brother?" for she had not known him so changed was he by his long travels, and she said, "Truly your hair is unkempt and your clothes are not as they were, and I did not know you, but you shall be once more dressed as in time past, and I shall see if you are my very brother Wagacharaibu."

So she went to her husband, who had carried her away in the old days, and she got four sheep and three goats, and the four sheep were killed, and Wagacharaibu ate of the flesh and became big and strong once more, and his sister took of the fat and dressed his hair, and put it on his shoulders, and of the three goats two were black and one was white

and she made a cape, and she took a spear and gave it him, and it was the spear which her husband had carried when he came to the little hut when she was alone, and gave it to her brother. She put on his arms brass and iron armlets, and ornaments on his legs and round his neck, and then she said, "Now I see that you are indeed my brother Wagacharaibu." And the husband of M'wer'u loved Wagacharaibu dearly, and he gave him twenty goats and three oxen, which was much more than the price of his sister, but he gave it because of the affection he bore him, and he built him a hut in the homestead and gave him thirty goats to buy a wife. And Wagacharaibu bought a maiden and brought her to the hut, and the goats of Wagacharaibu increased and multiplied, and he took ten of the goats and his sister's husband gave him twenty goats and he bought a second wife, so that Wagacharaibu did not go back to his old life any more, but lived with the sister he had lost and with her husband.

*The Story as told by the old Woman NAGATOU*

Once upon a time there were a brother and sister who lived together, and the mother died leaving many goats, and the brother looked after the goats in the daytime, but in the evening he went away from home, for he was very beautiful and had many friends. The name of the girl was Wa ché ra, the name of the brother Wa m'wé a.

Now one day when the brother returned Wachéra said to him, "Two men were here yesterday, and if you go away and leave me they will carry me off," but he said, "You talk nonsense" and she said, "I am speaking the truth, but when they take me I will bear with me a gourd full of sap which is like fat and along the path I will let it drop so that

you can follow my trail " <sup>1</sup> Now that night when Wam'wea brought the goats home, Wachera made a' great feast and gruel, but again he went away And when Wam'wea came back next morning he found the homestead empty, for his sister had been carried away as she said, but he saw the track where drop by drop she had let fall the sap which is like fat And Wam'wea followed over hill and down dale, and ever and again he heard her voice crying from the opposite hill side, "Follow after where you see the trail " The following day the sap began to take root, and to spring up into little plants, but his sister he saw not And at last he returned to his home to herd the flock, and he took them out to feed, but he had no one to prepare food for him when he returned at night, and if he himself prepared the food there was no one to care for the flocks, so he slew a goat and ate it, and when it was finished he slew yet another, and so on till all the goats were finished Then he killed and ate the oxen one by one, and they lasted him months and years for the flock was large, but at last they were all gone, and then he bethought him of his sister

Now the plants which had sprung were by this time grown to trees, which marked the way she had gone, and so he journeyed on for one month and half a month, and at the end of that time he came to a stream, and by the stream were two children getting water, and he said to the younger, "Give me some water in your gourd," but the child refused, but the elder child spoke to the younger and said, "Give the stranger to drink, for our mother said if ever you see a stranger coming by the way of the trees he is my brother " So he and the children went up to the homestead and he waited outside, and Wachera came out, and he knew her at once, but she did not know him, for he was not

<sup>1</sup> The wild gourd when ripe contains a soft pulp in which are its seeds. This pulp resembles the liquid fat obtained by melting the sheep's tail.

dressed as before with ochre and fat, and he came into her hut, and she gave him food, not in a good vessel, but in a potsherd, and he slept in the hut, but on the floor, not on the bed

Now next day he went out with the children to drive away the birds from the crops, and as he threw a stone he would say, "Fly away, little bird, as Wachéra flew away and never came back any more," and another bird would come, and he would throw another stone and say the same words again, and this happened the next day and the next for a whole month, and the children heard, and so did others, and said, "Why does he say the name Wachéra?" And they went and told their mother, and at last she came and waited among the grass and listened to his words, and said, "Surely this is my brother Wam'wéa," and she went back to the house and sent for a young man, and told him to go and fetch Wam'wéa to come to her, for she said, "He is my brother" And the young man went and told Wam'wéa the words of his sister, but he refused, for he said, "I have dwelt in the abode of my sister, and she has given me no cup for my food but a potsherd," and he would not go in And the young man returned to Wachéra, and told her the words of her brother, and she said, "Take ten goats and go again and bid him come to me," and the young man took ten goats and said, "Thy sister has sent these ten goats" but Wam'wéa refused, and the young man returned And Wachéra said, "Take ten oxen and give them to my brother," but Wam'wéa would not, and Wachéra sent him ten cows, and again ten cows, and still Wam'wéa refused to come in And Wachéra told her husband how she had found her brother, and how he would not be reconciled to her, and her husband said, "Send him yet more beasts," so Wachéra sent ten other cows and again ten more, till Wam'wéa had received forty cows besides the goats and the oxen which Wachéra had sent at the first, and the heart of Wam'wéa relented, and he

came into the house of his sister. And she killed a goat, and took the fat and dressed his hair and his shoulders, for she said, "I did not know you, for you were not adorned as before."

After Wam'wéa had been reconciled to his sister, he decided that eight wives should be given him, so the husband of Wachéra sent to all his relations round about, and they brought in goats, and Wam'wéa bought eight girls, some for thirty goats, some for forty. Other relations all came and built eight huts for the wives near to the dwelling of Wachéra, so Wam'wéa and his wives dwelt near the homestead of his sister.

## THE FOUR YOUNG WARRIORS

*Told by an M'Kikúru in our service*

Four young warriors built a hut (thin-gi-ra<sup>1</sup>) and lived together, and two of them were brothers, the sons of one father, and the other two were also brothers, the sons of another father. Now one day one of the young men came to the hut and he said, "There is a very bad beast, a hyena, in the road near here"; and one of the friends said to him, "I do not believe there is any such beast near here, for I have not seen one, and if there were I should not be afraid of him." To which the first replied, "If you will go to sleep to-night in the road, I will give you in the morning one ox and ten goats." So his friend said that he was not afraid and he would sleep that night in the road as had been said. He therefore spent his time making his sword very sharp, and he took his spear, and made that very sharp also, and when evening came he went out on to the road and laid down upon it and went to sleep.

Now he who had first said there was a hyena remained in the hut, but the other two young men of the thingira, one of whom was the friend of this first warrior, and the other the friend of the other warrior, found a big tree near the place where the young man was asleep, and climbed up into it to see what happened. Now as he lay on the ground asleep his sword stuck out from his side, and it was very sharp.

<sup>1</sup> The thingira is a hut serving as bachelors' sleeping quarters for young men and boys of one or more homesteads, p. 118.



And three hyenas came and looked at him. When the first one drew near he saw the sword and he was frightened and ran away back to his hole. But the other two hyenas fetched yet another, who was very big and strong, and he attacked the sleeping man. But the man awakened and sprang up and thrust his sword into him and he died. Then the next hyena came on, and he put his sword into him, too, and he also was slain. And the fourth hyena, when he saw that his friends were dead, was afraid and ran away.

And in the morning the other two warriors came down from the tree and they said to their friend, "How is it that you are still here?" And he showed them the bodies of the two hyenas he had slain. Then they all went back to the hut, and those who had watched told him who had remained how the wild beasts had been slain, and so the first warrior was obliged to pay one ox and ten goats as he said that he would do.

## A TALE WHICH INCULCATES KINDNESS TO ANIMALS

*Told by the old Woman NAGATUU*

ONCE upon a time a young man married a girl named Ka cham'-bi and brought her home, and the girl grew m'wé-li<sup>1</sup> in her shamba, and when the m'wéli was ripe she gathered it and brought it to her home-stead, but a little bird called Kan-i-ó-ni-kan'-ga<sup>2</sup> came by and picked up grains of the m'wéli and ate it, and Kacham'bi picked up a stone and threw it at the bird, and said, "Go away, don't eat my grain" And this she did three times, and the third time she broke the leg of the bird And the bird said, "Because you have broken my leg, harm will come to you" And he flew away

After a while Kacham'bi became ill and bore a child, and the old woman who tended her went down to the stream to get water to wash the mother and the new born infant And when she got to the stream what should she see but the Kamónikan'ga in the midst of the stream, spluttering with his wings and throwing water over him, and decked out like an M'kikuyu with necklaces of beads, and the old lady was so astonished at the sight that she stopped to look at him, and forgot all about the mother and the baby waiting in the hut, and another old woman came down to ask what had happened to her, and why she did not come back, and she, too, stood and gazed at the bird in his ornaments, and forgot to go back, and a third came, and a fourth, and then

<sup>1</sup> Fine grain

<sup>2</sup> Described as a small bird—yellow breast—blue back—jumps along

the rest of the people of the homestead all came down to the stream one by one till there was no one left in the village at all

And at last Kacham'bi said, "I must go myself and see what is happening" So she got up, put down the babe into the bed, and left the hut, and when she came to the stream, what should she see but all the people gazing, and in the midst of the stream with all his ornaments, the Kanionikan'ga whose leg she had broken. Now the bird, when he saw Kacham'bi, slipped out of the stream into the grass, and up to the hut, and found it empty, and he perched on the bed, and took the child's throat in his beak, and pinched it till the babe was suffocated, and when the mother came into the hut, there was the bird and her dead child. And the bird flew up to a tree, and all the people looked on, and he said, "I have done this to the woman because she would not give me grain and broke my leg, and I said I would work her ill, and so I have slain her child." Then Kacham'bi brought out corn and spread it on the ground plentifully, and the Kanionikan'ga ate and ate. And when he had eaten he flew back to the hut, and "made medicine," and perched again on the bed and the child breathed once more, and he said, "Because you have given me corn in plenty, I have given you back your child."

## THE GIRL AND THE DOVES

*Told by the old Woman NAGATŪ*

LONG ago a girl child called Wan-jī-ru was beaten by her mother so severely that her back was broken and she died, and the doves—(du-tú-ra)—came and gathered up her bones amongst the grass, and joined them together by means of little chains like women wear, and one who was very clever joined her back together. And she became alive again, and they found a house for her in a cave by the riverside.

Now three children came down to the opposite bank of the river to get water, and one was the younger sister of Wanjiru; and when the gourds were filled they each helped the other up with them on to their backs to carry home. But when it came to the turn of Wanjiru's sister, they refused, for they said, "Your mother beat your sister and killed her, so we will not help you," and they went away, and the little girl sat down and cried; and as she cried, Wanjiru came out of her home among the stones and came across the water, and took the gourd and helped her to put it on her back. But she said, "Do not tell any one at home that you have seen me—and this same thing happened many days. At last her mother noticed that the child always came home after the others, and she said, "Who helps you to lift up your gourd? Surely you are always last?" And she said, "I went among the grass, and there slipt it up myself." But her mother persisted, and at last the child told, and said, "I have seen my sister Wanjiru, who was dead, and she has helped me."

So the next day when the children went down for water, the father and mother went too, and hid among the grass, and waited, and when Wanjiru came, as was her custom, to help with the gourd, they sprang up and seized her and took her home

Then the doves all gathered together and flew to the home of Wanjiru, and they said to the mother, "Give us the chains you wear as ornaments," and the mother refused. So then they took back the chains they had given to make Wanjiru, and the one who was an expert took out from her head the long chain he had put in to join up the bones of her back, and all her bones fell to pieces again as before, and the doves flew away. Then the mother took all the bones and put them in the cave where Wanjiru had lived.

And the doves came once more and put Wanjiru together again but they said, "You must not help your sister when she comes for water." But when she thought the doves were not looking, and the child came Wanjiru helped her as before, but the doves saw her and said again, "You must not help your sister, or we will again undo our work and you will die." So Wanjiru refrained.

## THE STORY OF THE GREEDY HYENA

*Told by a small Boy, Servant of one of our ASKAR'IS*

THE Hyena made friends with the Sungú-ra<sup>1</sup> and said to him, "Get me something to eat." And the Sungúra first brought him a skin, but the Hyena said, "That is not nice." So the Sungúra said, "I will find you something really good." So he climbed a tree and brought him down some honey, and the Hyena liked it immensely, and ate quantities, and he made the Sungúra fasten up his mouth with pieces of stick, so that nothing should escape, and he lay there for ten months, and the animals came and offered to take out the stitches, but he said no. At last the Kihú-ru<sup>2</sup> came, and him he got to take out the skewers, but the Kihúru became entangled in all the honey which came out and could not move; and there he lay on the ground for six months until the rain came and washed it away.

Then the Kihúru went and got a gourd which has white juice inside, looking like melted fat, and he dipped some grass into the juice, and he went where all the hyenas were assembled. The hyenas saw it, and said, "Where did you get that fat?" And he said, "Among the stars." The hyenas thought they would get some fat too if the Kihúru would take them. So all the hyenas took hold of the Kihúru—some by his wings and some by his legs and his tail, and mounted with him up

<sup>1</sup> Sungura, an animal described by the Akikúyu as resembling a small cat: tan and white underneath and having a short tail: sometimes translated "rabbit."

<sup>2</sup> Kihúru—described as a big bird—the neck white, the rest of it black

and up in the air to get the fat as they thought, and when they were a great height up the Kihúru said to the hyenas, "Can you see anything below?" And they said "No." Then he shook them all off, and they fell and fell from the great height to the earth, and they were all killed, so that there would have been no hyenas at all to-day if just one had not escaped, with only a broken leg; and she became afterwards the mother of all the hyenas there are now, but her children were born lame just like their mother, and that is the reason why all hyenas limp as you may see to this day.

## THE ELEPHANTS AND THE HYENAS

*Told by a small Boy belonging to our Camp*

THE elephants once went to take salt, but one lady became ill and could not return with the rest. Now the others saw a hyena's hole, and they confided the sick elephant to his care, telling him to look after her till she was better.

But the hyena betrayed his trust, for when a baby elephant was presently born he thought it looked so good that he ate it.

So when her friends came back the mamma elephant told them what the hyena had done to her child, and they were very angry, but they said nothing, only told the hyenas that presently the elephants were going to have a big dance, and invited the hyenas to come and see it. And one hyena went home and consulted his wife as to whether he should go, and she said, "Yes, go certainly, for there will be much food." Now when the day came the elephants danced and the hyenas looked on, and a baby elephant, who was standing and talking to a baby hyena, said, "Can you root up that tree?" And the hyena said, "It is far too big for me." But the little elephant said he could do it, and he went and rooted up the tree at once. All the elephants gathered up and began to fight the hyenas. Now the hyenas had gathered together the bones of many dead and put them in a hole, but the elephants went and got these and made them into clubs, and the elephants fought the hyenas and the hyenas fought the elephants, till the hyenas were all



dead, and the elephants lay down exhausted and went to sleep.

But just one of the hyenas escaped, the hyena who had consulted his wife, and he went home and beat her most sorely because she had advised him to go, saying that there would be much food. Then, being much beaten, she ran away, and took refuge with the elephants, but they said, "You are no friend of ours"; so she had to go back again to her husband, and he beat her again, and that is the end.

The moral is, it never pays to give advice; but that is English, and not Kikúyu.



## STORIES CONCERNING THE RAINBOW (MU-KUN'-GA M'BÚ-RA, LITERALLY SNAKE-RAIN)

THE following two stories deal with the Rainbow, in its mythical aspect of a predatory monster which lives in water. Our first introduction to this animal was during a visit to one of the falls of the River Sagana,<sup>1</sup> near the chief Kitongi's. As we stood in the gorge, looking at the falling water, from below the natives related a somewhat incomprehensible story connected with a "bad beast which lived in the pool at the foot." This beast "came out," they said, "at night and climbed a certain tree on the bank," which was pointed out. It also ate people. It had at one time travelled to the great lake of Naivasha, a distance of some forty miles, journeying all the way by water, but it had now come back again to its home in the falls of the Sagana. When we had scrambled up the cliff to the top of the fall, we found the boys lying on their stomachs on the edge of the rocks, and gazing earnestly down into the foaming torrent beneath; they beckoned eagerly to us as we approached. "If we would look below," they said, "we could ourselves see the monster." Bending as far as possible over the seething mass of water, there became visible in its spray a particularly clear and beautiful rainbow, the violet tone of which, either in the hue itself or its reflection, in the pool did not, with a little imagination, look unlike a snake-like body lying in the depths of the water. It cannot, however, be asserted that this particular resemblance is

<sup>1</sup> Named by us the Kitongi Falls, in the absence of any definite native name.

necessarily the origin of the legends, in view of the fact that there are stated to be many such rainbow monsters, and they live in lakes as well as in waterfalls

Other information gathered at various times is as follows "The rainbow in the water and the sky is not the animal itself but its picture" (? reflection)—"When it comes out at night its tail remains in the water" Another description stated "When the rain comes, the rainbow puts its head out of the water and lies on its back and turns red and is reflected in the sky, at other times it is green It eats goats and cattle"

A legend was related by yet another authority, which the narrator was careful to explain was "not a rogano but said to have actually taken place, though he himself could not vouch for its truth" The rainbow which lived in the Lake of Naivasha came out of the water at night and stole the cattle of the Masai, who lived in a village not far from its borders When it had done this, not only once but twice, the young warriors prepared for its reception—they made hot their spears in the fire and awaited its coming Now the only vulnerable part of a rainbow is the back of its neck When therefore the monster once more made a descent on the cattle, the young men carefully judged their aim and plunged their spears into his neck behind his head and the rainbow, being thus wounded, fell dead

After this it is prosaic to be merely told "that if you walk under a rainbow you will die," and that "when the rainbow appears it stops the rain" (a somewhat nice inversion of cause and effect) "The people of old days say God put it there because, if there was very much rain, every one would die" The native last quoted had been brought in contact with missionaries In translating the "rogano" the Kikuyu name Mukun'ga M'bura has been kept It will be seen that the monster sometimes figures as a man and sometimes as a snake

It was naturally of the greatest interest on returning home to find that similar stories regarding the devouring propensities of the rainbow, and also in some cases of its connection with a snake, are told by people as widely scattered as the inhabitants of New Zealand, Burmah, Dahomé, and also by the Zulus.<sup>1</sup>

## THE GIANT OF THE GREAT WATER

*Told by an M'Kikúyu employed as Porter*

THERE was once a small boy who was herding the goats, and his father came and pointed out to him some long and luxurious grass, and told him to take them there to feed. So he pastured them there that day, and took them there again the day following. Now the next day while the goats were feeding the owner of the pasture appeared, and he said to the boy, "Why are you feeding your goats on my grass?" And the boy said, "It is not my doing, for my father told me to come here." And he said, "This evening I will go to your father's house and talk to him." Now the owner of the grazing ground was a man very big and tall, and his name was Mukun'ga M'Búra, so in the evening he came to the home of the boy and he said to the father, "Why were your goats eating my grass when you could see I had closed it?"<sup>2</sup>

The father said, "That is my affair." So he said, "As you have done this, I will eat you and all your people," to which the father replied, "You shall do no such thing." So the young men made sharp their swords and got ready their spears, but Mukun'ga M'Búra was too strong for them, and he

<sup>1</sup> See Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 1, p. 294, ed. 1903.

<sup>2</sup> i. e. had put up the usual signs to show that medicine had been made to protect it from trespassers (see p. 271).

ate the father, and the young men, and the women, and the children, and the oxen, and the goats, and then he ate the house and the barns, so that there was nothing left. The only person who escaped was the little boy, who ran away and hid in the grass so that Mukun'ga M'Búra did not see him.

Now he made himself a bow and shot wild game, and became very strong and built himself a house, and at last he said, when he was full grown, "Why do I stay here? I am big and strong. Mukun'ga M'Búra, who killed my father and all my people, still lives." So he took his sword and made it very sharp, and went to the district where Mukun'ga M'Búra lived, and as he drew near he saw him coming up out of the great water where he lived. He shouted to him "To morrow I will come and kill you." And he went back and ate more meat so as to be stronger than ever. The next day he went again, but Mukun'ga M'Búra was not to be seen, but the third day he met him again, and he said, "You have killed all my people, so I will kill you," and Mukun'ga M'Búra was afraid and said to the warrior "Do not strike me with your sword over the heart or I shall die, but open my middle finger," so the warrior did so and he said, "Make a big hole, not a little one." And the warrior made a big hole, and out came first the father, whom Mukun'ga M'Búra had eaten, and then the young men, and the women, and the cattle, and the sheep, and the houses, and the food stores just as before. And Mukun'ga M'Búra said, "You will not now kill me?" And the warrior said, "No, I will spare you for you have restored my father, his people and his goods, but you must not again eat them", and he said, "They shall be safe."

The warrior and his people went back and rebuilt their homesteads, but the warrior thought to himself, "Now this Mukun'ga M'Búra is big and strong and very bad. He has eaten many people. He may come again and destroy my father."

So he called the young men and asked them to come and



fight Mukun'ga M'Búra with him, and they all made ready for war and went to the home of Mukun'ga M'Búra. He saw them coming and said, "Why are you here to slay me? Have I not given you back your people?" But the warrior replied, "You are very evil; you have killed and eaten many people; therefore you shall die." Then they all fell upon him and slew him, and cut off his head and hewed his body in pieces. But a big piece separated itself from the rest of the body, which was dead, and went back into the water, and the warrior returned to his home and told his brothers that he had slain Mukun'ga M'Búra, all but one leg; "but to-morrow," he said, "I will go into the water and get that leg and burn it." And the mother besought him not to go, but the next day he went, and when he got to the place, there was no water to be seen, only cattle and goats, for what remained of Mukun'ga M'Búra had gathered together his children and taken all the water and gone very far, but the beasts he had not taken, but left behind. So the warrior went back and brought his people, and they gathered the cattle and goats together, and took them back to their own homestead.



## THE SNAKE FROM THE GREAT WATER

*Told by Mo só ʼi, a young Woman, a relative of the  
Chief N'Duʼi*

Two warriors went to look for wives. One was called Wa du a and the other Wa m'wer' i,<sup>1</sup> and as they travelled they saw a girl in the road. Now she was not beautiful, for she had lost one eye, but Wam'per'i liked her, and the girl also liked Wam'wer'i, so he took her to be his wife and proceeded no further in his search. But Wadúa said "Why do you take a girl who has one eye missing?" And he proceeded further on his journey. Now as he went on his way he saw a young boy, and he said to him "Do you know any maiden in this countryside?" And the boy replied, "No, I know of no maiden, except, indeed the maiden Wa shú ma but she is not to be thought of, for she does not like young men." And Wadua journeyed again and he met an old man, and he said "Can you tell me where I can find a maiden?" And he said, "There is no girl but Washuma and she will speak to no man." Again he met an old woman and she told him the same tale of Washuma that she would not be wooed by any man. At last, on the eighth day he met a young man and he yet again spoke of Washuma in the same manner. So Wadua inquired of him where the home of this Washuma might be, and he said, "On the opposite hillside where you see the smoke ascending." So Wadua went that day and slept that night on the road,

<sup>1</sup> Literally son of the Sun and son of the Moon—common names.

and after three days he came to the house of Washúma and tarried outside, while the girl herself was in the shamba. Afterwards she came in and cooked food, and came out and went to the storehouse and got "sir-oc'-o" and cooked it, and came and gave it to the stranger. But he would not take it, and she went again to the storehouse and took "beans," but he would not; and then gruel, and still he would not; but she did not think of milk, and when she brought milk he drank it, and she offered him more, but he said; "it is sufficient."

Now the father of Washúma returned, and the goats and oxen came in for the night, and the girl took Wadúa into the homestead that he might sleep, and she said to him, "If you should hear in the night a great noise, do not go out." And he said, "Why?" Washúma said, "Because a great animal like a snake comes every night and kills and eats the oxen." And the animal was called Mukun'ga M'búra, and its home is in the water.

So Wadúa slept in the house; but in the night, when he heard a great noise he got up and took his spear; but Washúma took him by the arm and besought him not to go. But he was too strong for her, and he went out, and he saw the snake, and took his spear and stuck it in the back of the neck, so it died, and he came back to the house and he said nothing.

And in the morning, when the birds began to chirp, the father went out to see the cattle, and he found the dead beast, and he said, "Who has done this?" And the girl told her father. And he sent out, when all the young men were gathered on the dancing green, and he set them a distance, and he said to the youths, "He who can run this distance and return, he it is who has slain the Mukun'ga M'búra." So they ran, but some fell and some panted like sheep; but when the time came for Wadúa, he ran and returned and beat all the other youths. And the father said, "What shall I give you, since

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you have slain the beast?" And he said "I look for a wife, give me your daughter"

But the father said, "If a man has asked for my daughter, I have said to him, 'Tetch the ny o ya'"<sup>1</sup> So Wadúa arose and went to the big water, and Washuma stayed on the bank and looked on, and Wadua went, and the water rose to his calf and his knees and his waist, and then to his chest and neck and eyes Washuma thought he would be drowned, but Wadua went right under the water and stayed there, and he did not die Washuma waited, and when night came she slept there, but in the morning she said, "Surely he is dead", and she turned to go But as she went she heard a great noise in the water, and she looked round, and went back and saw Wadua and many others coming out of the water, and sheep and goats innumerable, and the water had all disappeared<sup>2</sup> and Wadua returned with the girl to her home And he divided the sheep and goats and he put half of them on one side and half of them on the other, for they could not be counted for multitude and he took one half for himself and the other half he gave to the father of Washúma, that he might have her for his wife

<sup>1</sup> Nyóya ya nágo described as a big white and black bird of which the young men wear the feathers

<sup>2</sup> It was explained in answer to a question that the vanishing of the water had nothing to do with the slaying of Mukunga Mbira

## TALES DEALING WITH LEGENDARY ANIMALS

THE following series of stories deals with two mythical beasts or monsters, the N'jen-gé and the I-li-mu. In one of the stories they are synonymous. The N'jengé, it was stated, is an animal which lived in old times; it was about the size of a sheep, had four legs, and was covered with hair. It fed on shamba produce, and it also ate meat. In the first story it plays the part of fairy "godmother"; in the second, it is described as with hair and beard, and fills the rôle of ogre, and is called Ilimu.

The Ilimu proper, however, takes the form of a man, either normal or abnormal in shape, and talks like a man, "but is a beast." His body is either wholly or in part invulnerable. His great characteristic is that he feeds on human flesh.

### THE STORY OF M'WAM-BÍ-A AND THE N'JEN-GÉ.

*Told by N'JAR-GE, Son of the Chief MUNGÉ*

ONCE upon a time there was a man who married a wife, and she bore him a male child; and he married a second wife, and she also bore him a male child. And after a while the first wife died. Now the name of the eldest son was M'wambia, and the name of the second was also M'wambia, and he was known as M'wambia the Less, to distinguish him from his brother.

Now when the two boys were about twelve and ten years, it happened that the animal known as N'jengé came from the wilds, and ate the food in the fields; so the two brothers went into the woods, and M'wambía the Elder made a snare to catch the N'jengé, and M'wambía the Less also made a snare at a little distance away. Now an N'jengé came into the snare of M'wambía the Less, and he released it and killed it and ate it. And an N'jengé also came into the snare of M'wambía the Elder, but he released it and did not kill it, he let it go free into the woods, and the two boys returned to the village and said nothing to their father.

Now the mother of M'wambía the Less went into the fields and gathered sugar cane, and put it into her basket on her back and brought it to the house, and the father took a large piece and gave it to his elder son, but to the younger he gave a small piece, and the younger said, "Why have you given me a small piece and my brother a big piece?" And he said, "Because you have a mother, while the mother of your brother is dead." Then M'wambía the Less said to his father, "Come into the woods", and he showed him the two snares, and told him how he had killed the N'jengé which he had caught, and how M'wambía the Elder had let his go. And the father was very angry and upbraided his elder son, because the N'jenge was very fat, and he chose a tree, tall, with a straight stem, and made him climb up it, and then he took sticks and stuck them into the ground around the tree with the points leaning inwards towards the tree, and made the points sharp, so that if the boy descended or fell down, the points would run into him and he would die, and he went away and left M'wambía in the tree.

Now M'wambía stayed in the tree for twenty days, and at the end of that time an N'jenge came and said, "Man' gí<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No meaning could be found—is simply a name

Ki-hú-ti!"<sup>1</sup> And M'wambia said, "I am not Man'gi, I am M'wambia." And the N'jengé took one spike and carried it away, and ten N'jengé came and each took one spike and carried it away; and at last the N'jengé came whom M'wambia had set free, and he said, "Man'gi." And he said, "I am M'wambia," and he told him how he had set him free. And the N'jengé, when he heard this, carried away all the remaining spikes; and M'wambia gradually unloosed the grip of his arms around the stem of the tree, and slid to the bottom. And the N'jengé made a hole open in his side, and out came a big sheep. M'wambia took some fat to eat; and at first he could not eat it for he was so weak, and was very sick; but afterwards he ate a little, and then a little of the leg, and then next day he ate another leg, and the sheep lasted him for food four days, and at the end of that time the N'jengé opened his side again and there came out a goat, and that lasted for food four days, and then there came out two goats, and these lasted three days, for M'wambia had grown stronger and bigger and there then came an ox, and the N'jengé ate too, and M'wambia grew still bigger and stronger, and the N'jengé said, "Go amongst the long grass and jump." And M'wambia went amongst the long grass and jumped twice, and N'jenge said, "You are not yet strong enough, and they ate another ox, and then he said, "Go and jump again"; and he went and jumped four times. And he said to him, "What would you like to possess?" And he said, "A goat." And the N'jenge opened his side and gave him one hundred female goats which had not borne, one hundred female goats which had borne, one hundred young goats who knew their mother, one hundred male goats, one hundred fat male goats, one hundred sheep which had not borne, one hundred sheep which had borne, one hundred young sheep who knew their mother, one hundred male sheep,

<sup>1</sup> ? Tree or bush.

one hundred fat male sheep, one hundred cows which had not borne, one hundred cows which had borne, one hundred calves, one hundred oxen, one hundred fat oxen

And the N'jengé said to M'wambía again, "What do you want?" And M'wambía replied, "Women"

And the N'jengé gave him two hundred goats and two hundred oxen to buy women, and M'wambía bought one hundred women. And the N'jengé said again, "What do you want?" And he said, "I want nothing more"

Then he went to the Gura river, and he built a big village for his wives and his oxen and his goats. But no children were yet born, so M'wambía went and tended the goats, and he sat on a hillside where he could see them all, for they were many

Now the mother of M'wambía the Less said to her young daughter, "Take a bag and go and get vegetables" So the child went to get the vegetables, but could see none, and she walked and walked, and at last she saw M'wambía sitting on the hillside herding goats, and she called out, "That is our M'wambía who was lost" And he said nothing. And then she called out again, "That is our M'wambía who was lost" So he spoke to her, and he asked, "How are they all at home, my father and my father's brother?" She said, "They are well", and she saw his village and his wives and cattle, and he took a goat and killed it and cut it up and put it into her bag. She walked twelve hours, and came to her home. As she came to the homestead she called out to her mother, "Bring me the cooking pot to cook the vegetables" And her mother brought a little one, and she said, "Bring me a big one" And she brought a bigger, and the girl said, "That is not big enough" And the mother said, "Do you want the one in which we cook meat?" and she said, "Yes" And she said, "What kind of vegetables have you got that you want so large a pot?" The mother

opened the bag and saw the meat, and she said, "You have stolen a goat" And she said, "I have not stolen it; it is from M'wambia" And she said, "Do not tell a lie M'wambia is lost" And the girl said, "I have seen him, and the day after to-morrow you shall come and see him too" And she told how she had seen him and his many goods So the next day they cooked the meat and ate it, and the day after they all went together to see M'wambia, his father and his father's brother, and the mother and the father's other wife, and M'wambia the Less and the girl, and all the family And when they came to where M'wambia was, they saw him sitting on the hill herding goats, and there was a river between, and M'wambia took a string and he tied a goat to the end of the string, and threw it across the river And the father took hold of it to go to M'wambia, and as he was being pulled across the river he was drowned, because he had been cruel to his son But the others got across safely, and when they came to the village of M'wambia and saw his many goods, they stayed there and made their home with him And after a while M'wambia said "I have many men and women in my homestead who do work" And he gave his relations work to do, one to mind the goats, one to mind the young goats, and one to work in the fields And he said "I will go away for a while and see if they do their work well" And he went to another village and there slept for five days And when he came back to his homestead he saw some fat, and he said, "What is this fat on the ground?" And he looked and saw on the wall the head of N'jengé, and he knew that his friend the N'jengé had come to the village while he was away, and his relatives had killed it And he said no word to them, but he said to himself, "My luck is gone, because the N'jengé is dead with whom I am of one heart" And he took a stone and a knife and made his knife very sharp, and he killed all the women and all the men, and all the goats and all



the cattle, and then he took the knife and plunged it in his own breast, for the N'jengé was dead

A similar story was told in a different district by the girl Mo só ni, a relative of the Chief N'du ni. The differences were as follows. The father assisted in setting the snares, the children were both the sons of one mother, the younger brother, who was named N'jer'-u, found out that M'wambia had freed the N'jengé and extorted blackmail for preserving silence, in a shape of a part of the food of his elder brother. The father saw that M'wambia was growing thinner, and on demanding the reason the story came out. The hero was not imprisoned in a tree, but staked out on the road in the form of a cross with one hundred and ten spikes. The animals came one by one, the lion, the mongoose, the leopard, the buffalo, and the elephant. Each asked in turn why M'wambia was thus imprisoned, and being told the reason, each pulled out a spike. Finally the N'jengé appeared himself and removed the remaining spikes. M'wambia subsequently went back with the N'jengé to his home and tended his goats. When the family came to see him they were drawn across the stream with a leather strap, with the exception of the father, for whom only a grass rope was used, and he was accordingly drowned. The story ends with a prosperous instead of a tragic note. All remain at the home of the N'jengé and grow rich.

# THE STORY OF THE GIRL WHO CUT THE HAIR OF THE N'JENGÉ

*Told by KAR AN'-JA, a young M'likúyu in our service*

ONCE upon a time a young warrior sent his little sister to fetch water from the river, and in bringing the water she let the gourd fall and broke it, and her brother was very angry, and said, "You have broken the gourd, go away and bring me back instead of it the hair of the N'jengé. And the little girl ran away a long distance, for she was afraid her brother would beat her, and in the road she met an N'jengé. He was very big and his hair was very long, and he was called I li mu

And when they got to the house of the N'jengé he took a stick and struck with it on the ground and a hole opened, and out of it came many cows and goats, and the girl ate and then the N'jengé struck again, and the rest of the cows and goats all vanished. And the same thing happened again, and she ate yet more; and became big and fat. Then the N'jengé left home and went away on a journey. Now the N'jengé had a child—a boy, and the boy loved the little girl dearly, and when his father was gone he said to her, "Give me your ornaments." And she took off the beads she wore round her neck and arms and gave them to him, and he put them on one side, and then he took a strong smelling stuff and plastered it all over her neck and head, and said "Now fly, for my father has gone to collect firewood to make a fire, and when he comes back he will eat you."

And the girl fled from the house of the N'jengé. Now Ilimu had collected two friends, N'jengé like himself, and they had all gone to get firewood to make a fire and have a great feast and eat the girl, and as she fled she met on the road the first of these bad N'jengé carrying a bundle of sticks towards the house, and he said to her, "Are you the little girl of the N'jengé?" And she said, "No, that little girl had armlets and bracelets." And he let her go on, and then she met the next friend and the same thing happened again, and last of all she met Ilimu himself, and he looked at her to see if she was the child he had caught, and he saw that she had no necklace and no armlets, and he came near and smelt the strong smelling stuff, and he was persuaded that it was not the same girl and he said to her, "I want some one to shave my beard and cut my hair." For he had a long beard and long hair behind. So she shaved his beard and cut his hair, and put the hair she cut off in her bag and went on her way, and came back to her mother's house.

When she came to her home she saw her brother who had been so angry with her and gave him the hair of the N'jenge as he had asked but not long afterwards a young warrior came to buy the girl for his wife, and he gave the purchase money to her mother, thirty goats, and she went away with him to his house for she loved him. But before she went she said to her mother, "Don't give my eldest brother the goats for he has behaved cruelly to me, but keep them and let my younger brother have them" for her mother had also given birth to another boy, and she was fond of the child but her other brother she did not love. And when the girl was gone the eldest brother came to the mother and said "Give me the goats", and the mother said "No I shall not give them to you for they were paid as the mark of your sister and she said you were not to have them for you were angry with her because she had broken the gourd and told her she

## THE TALE OF THE FORTY GIRLS

*Told by NAGATUU, Mother of one of the herds of the Chief  
N'DUINI*

FORTY girls went to get firewood. As they came back single file along the road, they met Ilimu, who has one foot and walks with a stick, and his other foot comes out at the back of his neck, and he has two hands. And his body is like iron, so you cannot hurt him. And the first girl he came to said, "Do not eat me, eat the next"; but of each in turn he took a finger, and the last one he ate altogether.

Now before they went home all the girls went to have their teeth adorned,<sup>1</sup> and as they came back they met a man on the road, and they asked him whose teeth were the most beautiful, and he looked at them all and he said, "Those of Wa-shi-shi and Moiré-wa-nyí-na"; and these two girls were sisters by the same mother. And they met another man, and asked him the same question, and he said the same thing—and a third and fourth gave the same answer. And when they got to their homes they asked again, and the fathers and mothers still said those of Washishi and Moiréwanyina, so the other girls were sorely grieved.

The third day they again all went to the wood for firewood, and they made a big hole by a sacred tree, and each of the girls went in in turn and came out again, and the two sisters went last, and Moiréwanyina came out safely; but when it

<sup>1</sup> I am not aware to what practice this refers. The word employed was so-ni a.  
See p. 33

came to the turn of Washishi she went in and the others piled on firewood and earth on top of her and buried her alive.

Now her small brother kept cows near the tree, and Washishi heard the tramping, and she cried out, "Do not bring the cows where they will tread on me."

And the boy went home and said, "There is some one crying out near the sacred tree." Now as the other girls returned they had made "medicine," and drank it, so that any one who told at home what had happened to Washishi would die.

The next day the boy went again, and Washishi called out once more, and then he knew it was his sister, and said, "I have heard Washishi." So the father and mother and all the relations went and dug out Washishi. She was very thin, and her clothes were worn out, and they brought her home, and she rested many days.

Then she got three gourds and filled them with milk, one with the milk of wild animals, one with that of cows, and one with that of goats; and her father called all the other girls into the house, and Washishi got the tail of a wild animal and put it into the jar of milk from wild animals and sprinkled the girls, and they went to sleep; and she sent to all the fathers of the girls and said, "Your daughters buried me in a hole because my teeth were more beautiful than theirs, and if you do not give me presents they shall die and never wake again." So they brought her many goats. Then she put the tail of a cow in the jar of cow's milk and sprinkled them with milk, and they all woke once more.

## THE MAN WHO BECAME A HYENA

*Told by the young Woman MOSONI*

A young man called Ilmu went on his journey to look for a wife, and coming to a certain homestead he saw a maiden, Wanjiru by name, whom he admired greatly, so he said to her, "I should like to buy you," and she consented. She therefore went back with him to his home, and he paid three oxen for her to her people—a black one, a white one, and a dun one<sup>1</sup>

But when she came to his house he remained with her only three days, and on the fourth he went a long journey into the wilds and stayed away many months, and while he was in the woods he had no food but the food of carrion beasts, for he lived, like a hyena, on dead men

And after the end of this long while he returned home and he found that his wife had borne him a child during his absence, but she herself was poor and neglected and had no clothes to wear

Now one day the wife, Wanjiru, went out to work in her shamba, and she left her child in the house, and her husband stayed behind in the house also, and when she came back she looked round for the babe but the child was nowhere to be seen, for behold, whilst the mother was at work, Ilmu had seized her babe and devoured him. And Wanjiru was much afraid and she fled into the woods and climbed up into a tall

<sup>1</sup> My servant Njarge who was translating here said this was not Kikuyu custom he should have given the marriage portion first. The girl replied. It is the story.

tree, and there she stayed at the top. And she thought to herself, "The child is dead, and I shall die also," and she wailed like the spirits of the dead,<sup>1</sup> and she stayed there for three days. At last Ilimu came to the foot of the tree, and Wanjiru cried aloud, "Alack, for the black ox and the white ox and the dun ox!" for for these oxen she had been sold to Ilimu; and Ilimu gazed up into the tree and said, "I see a 'kisambo' <sup>2</sup> among the branches." So they remained for seven days, till her four brothers heard the wailings of their sister like the spirits of the dead, and they came and saw Wanjiru above and Ilimu below. Now the body of Ilimu was such that though he looked as other men, parts of it were as iron, which no spear could touch, but parts again were as that of other men, first a band as of iron and then a band again of flesh. And the brothers of Wanjiru came up, two on one side of Ilimu and two on the other, and Ilimu in the middle; and one struck him with his spear, but he hit on a band of iron, and his spear turned back, so Ilimu was unhurt; but another cried out, "Strike below the arm," and a third struck below the arm, where Ilimu was as other men, so he fell dead.

Now when Ilimu was dead, Wanjiru came down from the tree, and her brothers saw that she was thin, miserable, and unclothed, and they said, "This was a young warrior who came to woo you, how then has he become changed into a beast?" The girl went home with her brother, and they killed a sheep and put clothes upon her and ornaments, and in time a young warrior again came and saw Wanjiru, and bought her.<sup>3</sup> She went home with him and she lived with him, and

<sup>1</sup> "Ngoma," p. 240

<sup>2</sup> Described as a "small beast, long tail, lives in trees" (1 squirrel)

<sup>3</sup> Objection being taken to the girl being sold a second time, as contrary to Kikuyu custom, N'jarge explained that "this would be done by relations when the intending husband did not know that the marriage price had been previously paid." In this instance there were apparently no relations of the deceased husband to claim the widow.

in two years, counted after the manner of the Akikúyu,<sup>1</sup> a child was born. But when the child was still a babe the father turned from being a man and became a hyena, and devoured first the babe and then the mother Wanjiru. Such is the end of the tale.

Asked if the girl Wanjiru was not like other women, because each of the warriors whom she wedded ceased to be a man and became a beast, the girl narrator replied that "These things happened not because of Wanjiru, nor of any one else, it was the work of God, for God did such things, as the tale tells us, in the days of very long ago."

<sup>1</sup> See p. 40





*K.R. phot.*

GATHERING TO DISCUSS HUT TAX

The sheep have been brought in as payment in kind.

## CONCLUSION

### KIKÚYU UNDER THE ENGLISH

THIS book has nothing to do with the political state of East Africa. It is, however, impossible to take leave of the Akikúyu without giving some thought to the stupendous change in their environment brought about by the advent of the white man.

The Akikúyu are not unnaturally fearful lest their land should be taken from them by the newcomers. It is the fulfilment of a solemn promise to point out to the people of England that all reclaimed land in Kikúyu, whether under cultivation or lying fallow, is private property, and to make known their urgent request that it shall not be given to others. Kikúyu has for the moment been declared a native reserve, but it does not thereby follow that any individual native is guaranteed security of tenure.

The result of British dominion, which has at present the widest bearings, is the abolition of tribal war. This has undoubtedly in many ways great advantages, but the fact must be faced that we have thereby deprived the men of the nation of one of the greatest stimulants to exertion, and taken from them their natural responsibility for the defence of their homes. Nothing marks in its way more clearly the change from the old régime to the new, than the fact that the women now work in the fields without protection. Formerly, even in days of comparative peace, a band of their male belongings would always have been seen grouped on some hilltop near at hand, watching, ready armed, for the slightest signal of distress. In the present era a man who has wives to work for

him is without occupation. It seems certain that matters will eventually adjust themselves, through the fact that the extinction of war will render monogamy compulsory, but that time is not yet.

The usual solution offered is that all natives must learn to work. The Akikúyu are by nature an industrious people, not only are the women always well occupied, but the men can and will work when necessity arises. Their *métier* is agriculture, and therefore, unless driven by poverty, they resent being taken out of their own land to act as porters to distant districts, or for Government work; but none of the settlers with whom we came in contact complained of lack of labour. No man, however, be he black or white, works continuously without some object to be attained. The wants of the Akikúyu are easily satisfied, and the stimulus to effort is accordingly small. Even low wages exceed many times the cost of food, which is the only necessary outlay. Regular labour is therefore objectless.

Allowing, therefore, that the native will not work of his own free will to the extent that the European, who is dependent on his labour, feels to be essential, how is the situation to be met? One school of thought argues that under no circumstances should compulsion be brought to bear. The other holds that the native is in the position of a child, and that no child, either for his own sake or that of others, is allowed to be wholly idle. These persons would support a reasonable and limited amount of well-paid labour. Compulsion is none the less real, if recommended by philanthropists disguised under the form of increased hut tax, a method which, with certain advantages, has the drawback that it may result only in added labour on the part of the women. The M'kakúyu is the slave of custom. He admits that he is the weaker, and must adopt the white man's ways, be they good or bad. All he asks is to be made clearly to understand what the white man's customs

really are. He will then mechanically conform, because it is his essential nature to do so. Most of the trouble between white and black in East Africa to-day lies in the fact that the Government has never hitherto consistently followed any one line of policy either to white or black.

There is yet a third and attractive method of solving the problems connected with native labour. The black man is neither to be compelled to work nor to be allowed to remain idle. He is to be stimulated to acquire new wants, and be impelled to labour of his own free will in order to satisfy them, that he is to be encouraged to abandon the simple life for the complex ways of civilisation. The spectacle of the native inspired with new wants is not, so far, it must be confessed, an attractive one. The Kikúyu chiefs have become rich owing to the practice by which they receive a percentage of the hut-tax which they collect in their area. In the few instances in which they have shown a desire to copy the white man, the first acquisitions are European clothes, which are eminently unsuitable, and a horse to add to their retinue, which may be seen being led, while its owner prefers to walk. In rare instances ambition rises to a stone house with an iron roof, a possession which, in the instance we saw, was obviously a white elephant. It is difficult to suppose that the desire for increase of luxury will not bring with it a drift to the towns. The charm which Nairobi had for our Swahili retainers was most striking. It will be an evil day for the Akikúyu if they also fall under the baneful attraction of the native bazaar in connection with European centres of population.

It is too early as yet to speak of the effect of Christian missions in Kikúyu. The earliest stations are in the hands of Italian Roman Catholics, but devoted work is being done by emissaries of the Church Missionary Society. Even those who are not altogether in sympathy with missionary labour may yet feel that if the abandonment of primitive life cannot

be avoided, it is at least well that changes should come in connection with a high ideal, and that the Englishman should bring with him not only of his worst, but also of his best

If it be asked how the Akikuyu themselves regard English domination the primary answer is that they naturally associate it with hut tax, and so resent it strongly Three rupees per hut is the amount demanded by the Protectorate Government and this is therefore the tax payable by the poor man who has one hut only Two and a half to four or five rupees is the sum which can be obtained for a month of labour

The natives are quite willing to admit that they have in return the benefit of security How far this is appreciated is a matter of individual taste Tranquillity has naturally greater attractions for the weak than for the strong They themselves will tell you that some liked the old order of things in this respect while others prefer the new The short sighted desire of the English authority to destroy the native administration of justice has been dealt with elsewhere

The question is not unfrequently asked Is there any possibility of a native rising? It seems highly improbable that the Akikuyu even if they desired to do so would ever achieve sufficient combination for a united attempt to throw off British rule but it is quite conceivable that if unwisely dealt with from headquarters the native might be inspired to make trial of strength in a way that would issue in terrible tragedy in the case of isolated settlers

There can unfortunately, be no infallible solution for the problems which inevitably arise when civilisation and barbarism meet and the answer given to many questions will largely depend on whether it is considered that the well being of the world is best promoted by aiding the progress of the stronger or by guarding the prior claims of the weaker It is pleasant to bear witness that while most grave errors and delinquencies occur to which it is unnecessary further to allude the English

rule cannot as a whole be considered as oppressive or tyrannical, nor without regard to the well-being of the natives. Much of the heart-burning in East Africa would be obviated by more sympathetic understanding at home of the many hardships which fall to the lot of the white man, and also of the point of view of the black. Mr. Roosevelt has well said that the object he aimed at in the treatment of native races is the avoidance of "brutality" on the one hand and "sentimentality" on the other. At this stage of development the personal equation is all important; for good or for evil the future of the native lies to-day in the hands of those men who are sent by England to represent her in Africa, the British officials.

K. R.

## APPENDIX I

### LETTER DESCRIPTIVE OF EUROPEAN LIFE AMONGST THE AKIKÚYU

It is felt that an idea of the conditions of life under which the information in this book was collected, can be best conveyed by reproducing a circular letter written by request, while first impressions were still fresh, to friends in England. Only a few necessary alterations have been made.

The idea of travel farther afield, which is alluded to at its close, had subsequently to be abandoned owing to reasons of health, and camping expeditions were restricted, as has been seen, to making closer acquaintance with our various Akikúyu neighbours. These expeditions were conducted much after the same manner as the journey described from Nairobi to Nyeri, with the exception that a certain number of the loads were subsequently transferred to donkeys. This last method of transport saves much anxiety as to the food supply for a caravan, though there are obvious difficulties in connection with it where very hilly or marshy country is concerned.

FIXED CAMP, NYERI,  
29th March 1907

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—We sailed into the beautiful harbour of Mombasa on the morning of 11th December, and found its luxuriant tropical vegetation, and good houses with pretty red roofs—like Ceylon, I am told—a particularly grateful sight after the barren coast along which we had been sailing. We were only there four or five days, however, as we found

the damp, heat, and mosquitoes very trying. The European colony of one or two hundred people seem to enjoy life greatly, in spite of drawbacks; but it grieved my British soul to see the red flag of the Sultan of Zanzibar flying above the Government offices, and realise this was only a Protectorate, and not British soil.

We accomplished the twenty-four hours' journey up the Uganda railway to Nairobi with a minimum of the usual discomfort from dust. The line traverses first the unhealthy waterless district which so long barred access to the interior, and gradually rises the 5000 or 6000 feet to Nairobi,—the last part is a plain which reminds one of South African veldt. Nairobi itself is also very South African, a few gum trees and tin shanties scattered at immense distances, and stores kept by Hindoos, all selling a little of everything of very poor quality, and at very expensive prices. There are some pretty bungalows in the suburbs (the place has grown enormously in the last few years), but a circuit of 10 miles for a white population of 600 makes getting about difficult. We had scarcely, however, time to make many friends, as we were busy during the little time we were there at the small hotel, unpacking our goods and getting ready for a start. S—— had to run down again to the coast to meet two horses which we have imported from Bombay, such things being practically unprocurable in British East Africa. They have proved a great success, though the premium for insurance, which seemed wise, was as high as 13 per cent., on account of the prevalence of horse sickness.

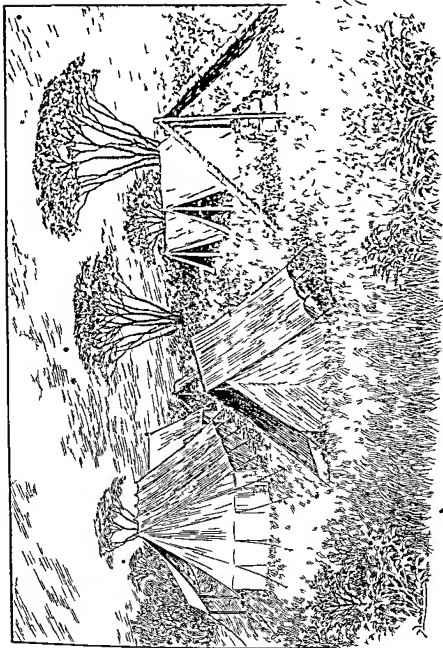
While we were at Nairobi we just saw S——'s friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hinde, who were passing through on their way to Mombasa, he having, to our great regret, just been transferred to the sub-commissionership there, from this, the Kénia Province.

We made our first camp a few miles from Nairobi, to see that all was in working order. Our staff, which we had got





A R 141  
HOTEL AT NAIROBI SWAHILI



Pen and ink sketch A

OUR CAMP

together there, and in which we have been very lucky on the whole, is as follows: Headman, 4 askaris or camp policemen (whose business it is to keep watch in turn day and night, pitch the tent, and look after the porters), one gunbearer, 2 table boys, cook, cook's boy, ayah for me, and last, not least, to act as groom, S——'s old servant Dosa, a delightful person who was brought up in an Arab slave household, and if he received orders to see I did not leave the camp during S——'s absence, would emphatically obey them. The idea that I was to have the best tent was received with open derision! This allowance of servants is fair, but by no means too much; they are always apt to become ill, and if they leave or are sent away, it is at a moment's notice, and this is a land where there are no charwomen! The best servants are the Swahili, or coast race; they are Mohammedans, and look down with lordly disdain on the Akikúyu among whom we dwell. Swahili also is the language one has to learn, and which carries one farthest among the many tribal tongues.

Tent accommodation is necessarily limited here, by the fact that all transport is by porters—no South African waggons. It took a little time to find the best way of packing one's belongings, for weeks and months at a time, into two tents 6 ft. 6 in. by 8 ft., room for little more than a bed and row of boxes opposite, with bathroom annexe. The two tents can be connected by an awning, under which we often have meals. We have now written home for a dining tent, and then we feel we shall be sumptuous indeed! A camp very soon grows; stable tents, servants' tents, etc., spring up, and it becomes quite a pretty sight, especially at dusk when the fires come out. I have counted twelve or thirteen at a time. But it is also a weird place at night, till one becomes hardened, going to bed with doors open for ventilation, and hearing the cries of the hyenas all around (one came the other night out of the long grass to

within three yards of the boys' huts), and knowing that lions and other beasts are quite close. When a leopard had been killed a quarter of a mile from the camp, which must have prowled nightly past it, I had such a barricade erected outside my door that S—— said "no animal not in the furniture removing business would think of attempting to enter," but then it really felt like the nightmares of one's early days.

"It comes when you are saying prayers,  
You hear it padding up the stairs;

You put your head beneath the clothes,  
It comes and nozzles with its nose!"

My barricade was, alas! powerless against the only enemy who did attempt to enter, and came in legions and battalions. The second night we were under canvas S—— sprang up at 1 a.m., saying, "Run, the ants are here." I needed no persuasion, while being bitten all over every second by countless little creatures, for we were in the line of march of a body of processional ants. There was nothing for it but ignominious flight. We sheltered in the boys' tent till morning, and then moved camp.

There was some delay about the arrival of our Akikúyu porters from Fort Hall, but at last one morning seventy native gentlemen walked into camp in a simple, effective, and enviably cool costume of a skin knotted over one shoulder and reaching to the knee, adorned also with much red mutton fat, to be transferred in due course to the outside of our packages! Then came the making up of loads. Our tin boxes of course are built for the purpose; but K——, being most anxious to know where to lay hands on everything, looked on in agony, while S—— with positive glee put cartridges in with "respectability" clothes, and household belongings in the stationery box, to bring the loads to their proper weight of about 50 lb. When all is ready the loads are put out in a row. There is a general

rush and scramble, each trying to get the lightest, and the procession moves off looking very much like our friends the ants, and really extremely comic. Those in authority bear proudly such honorary burdens as the camp lamps and water-ewers, while others look like Alice's knight, hung round with all sorts of odds and ends of properties, and crowned by way of head-dress with a kitchen saucepan. It is disheartening, in view of "the simple life," to find how many of one's fellow-creatures it takes to carry the mere necessities of a civilised existence for two people!

The regulation safari day (British East African for trek) is to be called at 5 a.m. in the dark, *pack and turn all your things out of the tent*, rather a chilly performance. By 6 a.m. one is breakfasting by the remains of the camp fire; while the tents are being struck, the sun is getting up (it rises and sets here at six o'clock of course all the year round), and the world generally looks brighter; but you can imagine when one's house moves every day at 5 a.m. many "essentials" cease wonderfully to become so! Then "to boot and horse," and make the most of the cool hours. S—— goes first, in case "there is a lion in the way!" followed by his gunbearers; then I and my attendant; next a few personal goods and provisions, and then the main body of safari. We ride a little ahead, in order that the caravan shall not disturb the game. But it is no use getting far beyond one's porters; indeed, going much beyond a walk is generally impossible, as I found to my cost the other day, for your horse puts its foot in a hole and down you come! So the pace and distance travelled are not great, 3 or 4 miles an hour and 15 to 20 miles a day. By eleven o'clock it is beginning to get hot, and the men to flag, and everybody is glad to finish the day's work.

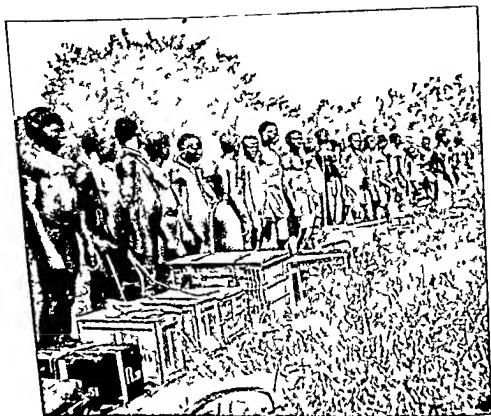
Fort Hall, the centre of the Kénya Province, lies 60 miles north-east of Nairobi, and we did the distance in five marches, being hindered one day by rain. There is now a good road, but

when S—— was here before there was only a track and fording rivers often a tremendous difficulty. At first the country is flat and uninteresting, it has all I believe been 'taken up' though after one leaves the precincts of Nairobi the only traces of white occupation are notices warning people not to shoot game no traces of which are to be seen! Then the ground becomes undulating and dotted with trees, quite like English parkland later, more like lowland Scotland and finally very beautiful and hilly.

Fort Hall itself has a wonderful position on the edge of the mountainous district and looking over an expanse of plain it consists of course of nothing except the houses of a few officials a tin bazaar and native huts. We were there two or three days and obtained a fresh supply of porters from a part of the country S—— knew. It was delightful to see his welcome—they came in headed by the brother of the chief Wombigu a great friend of his and bringing a sheep as a gift. Indeed as we went along the number of presents from our own people and others hens eggs bananas etc became quite embarrassing even meal times were invaded! I had a charming little native basket brought as a gift of welcome. S—— always goes by the Swahili name of 'Bwana Mrefu' which being interpreted is Mr Long. They are very anxious to know how many goats I cost!

Two days more safari northward again over perfectly beautiful very hilly country brought us to Nyeri. The road goes through so thickly populated a district that there is no land to give to Europeans unless one asphyxiates the natives whose little brown huts bananas and maize plantations are everywhere.

Nyeri itself is the farthest British outpost north in this direction (if one excepts I believe one man in charge of natives) and there is no civilisation between us and Egypt. S—— was with Mr Hinde when the district was settled.



*A. A. phot*

PORTERS READY TO START



A. A. ph

DONKEYS CARRYING LOADS







*A A phot*

OUR HOMESTEAD AT NYERI  
On returning after three years' absence



*K R phot*

OUR HOMESTEAD AT NYERI

Showing tent pitched under grass roof To the left is the kitchen, in the distance the police quarters of the Government station

and helped to choose the site for the station, building himself a little fort as headquarters, for those were troublous times. Fifteen miles or so to the eastward the land is still only nominally British, and no white man is allowed to venture, under heavy penalties. The Government fort, looking like a coast-guard station, stands on the edge of a broad ravine, we ourselves on a little plateau some 200 ft. down, and then there is a fall of as much again to the river. The immediate surroundings are rather bleak, owing to the painful habit of Akikúyu of cutting down all the beautiful forest trees to make their little patches of cultivation, and then deserting them in five years or less for further virgin soil elsewhere; but there are lovely rides in the district, and the distant views everywhere are glorious. On the western horizon, some 5 miles off, are the lovely Settima Hills (called by Europeans, Aberdare Range), while the whole of the eastern horizon is blocked, although some 20 or 30 miles off, by the great mass of Mount Kénia, rising like a giant ant-hill from the plain, over 17,000 ft. high, with its fine summit of snow-clad peaks and glaciers. The only Nyeri white residents at present are ourselves and the Collector, and sometimes a Board of Works' official.

Our homestead, which I have been asked to describe, looks like a group of thatched farm buildings, covering about an acre of ground, and you would hardly join in the exclamation of the devoted Dosa, "Camp *very* beautiful." The centre-piece is a large barn with a cement floor, under which our tents are pitched to protect them in bad weather, and the front part of which forms a very nice little verandah, in which we live and move and have our being. It, the little kitchen-house, and the "store" are enclosed by a quite respectable moat. Ten days after we got here the boys' huts, which were just outside, were burnt down, and we had an anxious quarter of an hour watching the wind, for if any spark had landed on our roof we should

have been left in Central Africa with the night-clothes we stood up in, and our evening frocks packed up at Nairobi!

The two months we have been here have been very busy, rebuilding, sorting, and getting things generally in order, before the wet weather comes, including a stone and mud room for S——'s photographic and other work. Building here is a sort of cross between "Robinson Crusoe" and the erections one made in the garden in one's early youth, plenty of sticks and grass and mud, and no glass! Altogether, as S—— says, the "daily round" has a habit of furnishing much more than "one needs to ask." There is, happily, unlike South Africa, any amount of labour, but it needs constant oversight to lead the simplest decent existence. I have taken as my ayah the wife of the Swahili groom, Dosa. She herself is an M'kikúyu. When I had shown her six times how to make my bed, and she still looked at it as a strange beast, I felt inclined to ask some of you to have a drawing-room meeting and collect funds for me as a deserving institution for the industrial training of natives. Now, however, she has once learnt, it is done without a mistake. I am now a great authority on how many ounces per week we require of tea, farinaceous foods, etc., all of which we get from home. Mutton we can buy here at the not ruinous price of 2½d. per lb., and beef is even cheaper. We keep milch goats and grow vegetables in a tiny garden by the river, so that I have had no time as yet for reading, sketching, or getting on with the language (I can make myself understood now, but with a very limited vocabulary). All this is to come, I hope, as I am able to economise time by better arrangements. Nyeri is peculiarly healthy, but it has been very hot lately, impossible to be out between eleven and three o'clock, and uncomfortably warm between nine and four; but as soon as the sun is gone one feels the effects of the elevation—about 6000 feet—and we almost always have an Anglo-Saxon fire of sticks on the

verandah floor at night, which fills us with a mixture of joy and apprehension.

After tea we have often had lovely rides, winding single file along native or animal tracks, with grass above our heads. On Sunday we take the whole day, breakfasting at 6 a.m., camping and sleeping in the shade during the heat, and coming home in the cool of the evening. S—— mourns over the departure of much of the game during the last three years, and I have not been nearer anything exciting yet in these strolls than an hour behind a rhino., but I live in hopes!

I have been asked to send photos of myself in various guises. There is only one guise—washing shirt, sun-helmet, long khaki coat, puttees, knicks, and short skirt,—the last shed for riding, and at other times when it seems good in my eyes.

As to our future plans, they are vague. We only look upon this as a base, and retreat in bad weather. We intended when we came out to live and collect for Kew and the Museum on the slopes of Kénia, which is all new country, and it is very disappointing to find that the Pax Britannica has not yet extended there. We might get leave later, but it means the expense of an armed escort and continual strain. Anyway, we can't go far from home till the rains are over, as the roads often become impassable from mud, and the rivers impossible to ford.

There is plenty to do in the neighbourhood, if we are energetic, in the study of primitive existence (we have been doing a little original heraldry in the designs of native shields); but this gipsy outdoor life grows upon one for its own sake, and after all if one lays in nothing but numberless fresh impressions and interests, the time will not have been wasted.—Your very affectionate friend,

KATHERINE ROUTLEDGE.

## APPENDIX II

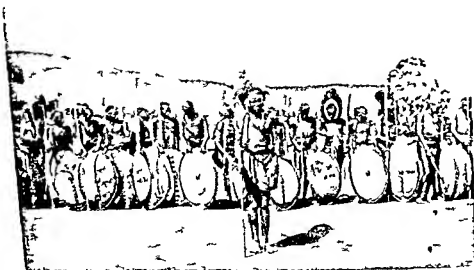
### THE MASAÍ

THE Masaí nation, of which we are beginning to hear something to-day, and of which it is not unlikely we may hear more in the future, as it is still very powerful, is a race found in parts of British East Africa and of German East Africa. Of late a considerable number have succeeded in escaping from German East Africa with their herds, and have settled on the west side of Lake Naivasha, a district which has for long past been Masaí country.\*

This people, who occupy the great plains and sparsely wooded rolling downs which are the feature of a very small portion of British East Africa, are a purely pastoral semi-nomadic race. They are divided into septs or clans, which again are united under two great chiefs, rival members of one hereditary ruling family, into an eastern and a western division.

Each clan has its own pasture lands, and is distributed over these in villages or Manyatta. The manyatta is a series of low, oblong, round-topped huts made of wands and plastered with cow-dung, each much like the top of a covered van. The huts are placed end to end, so as to form a strong circular enclosure perhaps forty yards across, this forming a fold-yard. The population of such a manyatta may be roughly put at 100 souls, with 200 cattle and 1000 sheep and goats. It is governed by one leading man who has finished his military career. He derives his position from

\* This article was written in 1904. Since then the Masaí have been removed by the British Government to the plains of Lei kípí-a



# MAASAI

Falling in prior to starting off to raid the Akiki vu

The warrior in the foreground is in command. He is wearing as he is by custom entitled to do a helmet made of the mane of a lion killed by him single handed with spear and shield after giving public notice that he intended to attack the beast and arranging for accepted witnesses to be present.

acknowledged former prowess in the field and present wealth, but he is practically controlled by the general consensus of opinion of the other old men of the village on any material question.

Such a manyatta would contain children; married and marriageable women; married men, i.e. those who have finished their military service; and youths not yet admitted as warriors. In another manyatta near at hand, by themselves, under the rule of a "legooran" or colonel, live the warriors and girls not yet marriageable.

The Masai do not do, nor will they do, any form of work whatsoever, beyond tending their cattle and raiding. They are not hunters, nor will they eat the flesh of wild animals or birds. They do not cultivate the soil, or trade, or manufacture, or exhibit the slightest inclination or aptitude for meeting the changed conditions that the advent of the white man has brought. Their whole life is spent in breeding cattle and stealing it. All fighting comes incidentally. Their greed for cattle is insatiable. A short time ago some of them made a raid to steal cattle. In so doing they had thirty men killed; still they were fairly successful as regards plunder, and everybody was pleased. On the road back, however, a quarrel arose regarding the distribution of the loot, with the result that sixty more were killed in settling this point, or double the number lost in action.

- Nothing more romantic can be pictured than the return of a raiding party. Far away behind some undulation of the ground is heard the first faint refrain of the Blood Song. Everybody rushes out wild with excitement. The captured cattle gradually come into view, with here and there a guard tending them. Then the warriors appear in a compact body of regular formation, moving very slowly with measured tread. The rhythm of the song is marked by slightly throwing the spear vertically up into the air, making it spin, and catch-



ing it again. As the spears are bright as silver, and the blades four feet long, they throw back the sun's rays like so many revolving mirrors. The warriors in their song recount what they have done, and will do, and every now and again an individual under its influence works himself up to such a pitch of frenzy that he loses all self-control, especially if he has failed to kill a man, and has to be disarmed and held down till the fit passes off, or he would certainly kill somebody. For this reason an old man always heads the procession as it approaches the crowd, in order to give the word to disarm any too excited warrior. Lean, gaunt, tall, and taciturn, they move at the walk or the run, with the long, easy, tireless stride of the bird of their own plains—the ostrich. Distance they hardly seem to consider. To cover it seems to cost them no effort. With sufficient incentive they perform extraordinary feats of endurance. Given that meat is available when fighting, they seem capable of eating an indefinite quantity: nothing is left, however large the original amount. If, on the other hand, no meat is to be had, they will go without food for an equally indefinite period without a murmur, or apparent inconvenience. In the manyatta a sheep, together with a quantity of milk, is the daily ration of five warriors. The girls seem to live by licking their thumbs: they certainly get no meat given to them.

When on the warpath sleep seems absolutely to be laid aside: they march and fight all day, and eat and sing round the fire all night; no sentries are posted or watch kept. They sit in small circles round a number of fires, each man's shield being placed on edge behind him and maintained by his spear driven into the ground butt-end downwards. Clothes they have none, but look exceedingly smart and well groomed, and a picture of manly strength and beauty, rubbed down with mutton fat and red ochre, their hair elaborately dressed in a short pigtail, and their arms and ornaments brightly burnished.

Essentially men of the plains, in the open they are splendid fighters, but become absolutely useless if confronted by an enemy in cover. Nor will they cross a river: the smallest stream that is unwadeable will turn an army. No Masai can swim, nor will he learn to swim, though its military advantage is obvious to him, and all adjoining nations are expert swimmers. This point is quite characteristic of the unadaptable character of these people. The Masai is certainly by nature a brave man: fighting, or, more accurately speaking, the taking of life in war, he loves for its own sake, and he is quite willing to stake his own life for the fun of the thing and the chance of distinction and plunder.

A few years ago the rinderpest broke out and almost exterminated the herds. Famine and disease followed to the herdsmen. Starving, they fell on one another, the eastern clans against those of the west, for the possession of the surviving cattle. One day more than a thousand dead lay on the Arthi plain, the result of a pitched battle: in other words, the result of a thousand simultaneous duels—shield and spear against shield and spear—for such is Masai battle. Time and place is specified and no quarter given. Similarly, when fighting with other nations, no quarter is given. Old men, women, and children, the sick and the wounded, all alike are speared, for no other motive than the satisfaction of taking life.

Masai raiding is a sudden irresistible rush delivered at a point far removed from the base of the raiders. They advance to the attack in a body, but each man fights independently. Once resistance is broken they sweep along, killing the fugitives and rounding up the cattle from the places where they have been concealed.

And then they are gone again, as suddenly as they came. The captured cattle they drive before them for great distances with excellent skill, losing but few from exhaustion.

There are no prisoners or wounded of the enemy. Their own wounded are left absolutely as they fall; no man delays a moment to help another—he lies where he falls till sundown. Then in the inky darkness of the equatorial night the *lut-ti* comes (the *lut-ti* is a form of hyena, bigger than a mastiff and quite as powerful), he utters his dreadful blood-curdling cry, which means “I have found,” as he walks round and round his victim. Then he rushes in: one snap of the strong jaws, one heave of the powerful shoulders, and the wounded man is completely disembowelled. The brute always begins in this way on man or beast, for he knows that he will thus be sure of his victim.

The tribal life and custom of the Masai is such that all the evils that the white man brings with him and in his train cannot but have the effect of making that which was already bad infinitely worse. Before the white man came on the scene, the only wonder is how the race survived its mistaken moral system. Since we have arrived, we have ensured its definite destruction. To-day, a Masai manyatta near “civilization,” i.e. near railway station, town, or Government post, is a sink of iniquity, corrupted by and corrupting physically and morally everybody in its neighbourhood. Here things are done without public and private disapproval that are punished by death by the neighbouring nations. Yet it is impossible to see any way in which our Government could attempt to intervene to save the Masai from their own folly and its inevitable result, even if it were possible or politic to try and preserve the race.

The Masai is by nature greed personified—sulky, morose, and vindictive; a born thief, an arch liar; absolutely devoid of the sense of gratitude or the spirit of hospitality. As a soldier he is unreliable, and only of use for fighting under certain limited and special conditions.<sup>1</sup> The least exposure

<sup>1</sup> The King's African Rifles have, I believe, now disbanded their Masai companies on these grounds.—W. S. R., 1900

to cold or wet kills him; and if you put him into clothes he dies in consequence, in addition to not being able to fight previously. For any form of manual labour he is mentally disinclined and physically unfit. He is material that civilisation cannot grind up in her mill. His existence depends on the possession of those wide stretches of grazing lands which are the very first thing that the white man must and will appropriate.

The product of special surroundings and of a system of absolute isolation, his environment must now inevitably completely change. The isolation that brought him into being has ceased to be. Change has come, but he cannot change. How, then, can he survive? The nations that he formerly drove back into the forest—the Akikúyu and the Akam'ba—will now rapidly creep out again and re-occupy the country under the ægis of the white man, whose purpose they serve, and the Masaí will remain but a name.

His old enemies and victims, the Akikúyu, in particular, are displaying in a marked degree those qualities that a native race must exhibit if it is to survive. Hard-working, intelligent and adaptable, peaceful and prolific, the M'kikúyu is the coming man under the altered conditions of to-day.

## APPENDIX III

### ATTIRE WORN BY WARRIORS WHEN PERFORMING A SPECTACULAR DANCE

THE following is a description of the attire of the performers at a dance for warriors at the Chief Mungé's. Those taking part were all very similarly adorned, but did not wear the short cape, the only and usual form of clothing for men. Their naturally short hair was divided into many little curls. Each curl was then lengthened by having string plaited into it, so that it should have a length of six to nine inches. Partings were then formed and the cords of each area brought together according to the style of hairdressing to be adopted. Small bone ornaments were attached to the hair at that part where baldness usually first appears, and to some of the shorter cords falling over the forehead. From the lobes of the ears depended various ornaments whilst, from the upper part of the periphery of the cartilage ornamental quills, from three to five inches in length projected at an acute angle with the side of the head. The whole of the head, face, shoulders, breast, and upper part of the back was of a bright brick red due to ointment. The line of pigment (sa-si) had a sharply defined crescentic border whilst over the back it was brought to a point between the shoulder blades. From this point either one band of colour was produced downwards along the spine, forming a Y, or two bands continued the sides of a V, thus forming with it the letter X. The prominence of the buttock was emphasised by two crescentic bands of colour, or in some cases, by the design of a young moon with its concave border directed outwards and serrated. Some of the performers had

a shield-shaped mark of a snow-white pigment extending in a horizontal line across the forehead, and thence brought to a point on the chin. In others the white pigment took the form of an oval patch embracing the nose, mouth, and chin.

This last had an indescribably funny effect—making the man, with one touch, exactly like a white nosed monkey. Where the face was all whitened the effect was ghastly rather than quaint. The rest of their bodies and limbs were ungreaed, in order the better to take the white pigment (mu ni o) with which an effect, as of tattooing, is obtained. The limbs are coated with pigment, and the pattern produced in relief in consequence of the finger tips removing the remainder.

Necklaces of some sort were invariably worn generally of trade beads, but sometimes of beads carved from the scented root of a rush (ki ri go). Some wore as a necklace many coils of a cord so woven with the fingers as to produce a succession of closely woven knots. This is known as lun oi o Pl. The most usual armlets were made of a leather strap embroidered with beads, from the lower border of which depended a fringe of fine chain. Armlets and bracelets of brass or copper wire as thick as a lead pencil also were commonly worn.

Round the waist was worn the mu ni o ro consisting of a Pl strap 1½ in wide, ornamented with blue and white china beads, to the lower border of which 4 in lengths of fine steel chain were applied as closely as they could be set.

Beneath the mu ni o ro in the middle line was tucked a small bunch of herbage, the equivalent of the fig leaf of modern art. To do so is amongst the Akikuyu most unusual.

Lengthways down the outside of the right thigh came the highly ornamented leather support of the dancing bell, Pl attached by horizontal straps above and below. At the bottom of the vertical strap was attached horizontally the bell. This was about the size and shape of a large banana slightly split open for its entire length with its extremities produced to a sharper point. In its interior are iron bullets. As these roll along the length of the cylinder a considerable amount of clanging noise is made.

Just below each knee, and extending some 6 in backwards, P

is a peculiar ornament made of the skin of the Colobus monkey. The skin is so cut that the upper border is formed of the black fur of the back, whilst the long white hair of the belly extends to the middle of the man's calf.

Round each ankle is a somewhat similar ornament made of the short black fur only. This, however, only extends some 3 in. behind the ankle. Below this again comes usually a strap, to which are attached six or eight bells similar in design to the foregoing, but only about the size of a broad bean seed. These little bells have no clappers, but jingle together.

Each man carried a bow in his left hand, and a sword (simi) in his belt on the right hip. In his left hand he carried his jugúma—a piece of heavy wood about 18 in. long, fashioned so as to have a head the shape and size of a lemon at the extremity of a stem the diameter of the little finger.

## APPENDIX IV

### THE SMELTING OF IRON ORE BY THE AKIKÚYU

• BY PROFESSOR GOWLAND, F.R.S., A.R.S.M.

THE account of the operation of smelting iron ore is of great interest both to the metallurgist and the archaeologist.

The preliminary preparation of the ore by the process of washing the iron-bearing decomposed rock, in order to get rid of the earthy material and concentrate the iron mineral itself, is an ingenious one, and has not been described before. It has its parallel, however, in the washing of argentiferous and auriferous material on the "planilla" in Mexico.

The primitive method of smelting employed by the Akikúyu is analogous to those that were practised in Europe and elsewhere in early times, and is based on the same principles, namely, the reduction of the ore to metallic iron when exposed to a high temperature in alternate layers with charcoal. The temperature obtained by the use of the rude bellows is not sufficiently high to produce iron in the form of pig or cast-iron, so that the small masses of resulting metal, which are technically termed "blooms," are wrought iron of a steely character. The furnace or hearth is much shallower than those of which remains have been found of the early iron age to the north of the Pyrenees and in the upper basin of the Danube, or those which are still in use in remote parts of India and in Japan. It resembles more those representing the earliest period of iron smelting, remains of which have been unearthed in Kordofan, and of which the Catalan fu



## ANOTHER EARLY FORM OF CATALAN HEARTH

We are greatly indebted to Sir Hugh Bell, Bart., for his kindness in placing at our disposal the following original matter. It consists of a sketch inscribed by the late Sir Lowthian Bell as having been drawn for him by Captain Grant "immediately after his return from discovery of Nyanza Lake." The date is not given, but was presumably 1863, at which time he speaks of having received the hospitality of Sir Lowthian. Grant returned from his expedition with Speke in the spring of that year, and the visit is believed to have been paid on the occasion of the meeting of the British Association in Newcastle, which took place in the following August. With the drawing is an explanatory note, apparently supplied later; it is accompanied by a covering letter dated July 1878.



FIRST AGE OF IRON MAKING.

The foregoing are here published as being the observations made by that distinguished traveller concerning the method of working iron adopted by a people situated at no great distance from the Akikúyu.

Note affixed to letter on back of sketch, written on separate sheet of similar paper:—

Seen at work in the  
countries of Unyamwezi  
and Bagweh (?  $4^{\circ}$  to  $6^{\circ}$   
S. lat. &  $32^{\circ}$  to  $33^{\circ}$  E. Long)  
in 1861 outside the village  
or in forests one to three  
miles from habitations.

I did not observe the  
quantity of iron made  
daily but would say  
that four men might  
turn out a dozen pounds  
weight in one day. I have  
no specimen of the ore.

"Seen at work in the countries of the Unyamwezi and Bagweh ( $4^{\circ}$  to  $6^{\circ}$  S lat., and  $32^{\circ}$  and  $33^{\circ}$  E. long) in 1861 outside the village, or in forests one to three miles from habitations.

"I did not observe the quantity of iron made daily, but would say that four men might turn out a dozen pounds weight in one day. I have no specimen of the ore.

J. A. G."

19th July 1878

MY DEAR MR LOWTHIAN BELL,—I am in a hotel here without any African notes or maps, and as I do not wish you to think that I take no interest in your queries I answer at once. But if you want the note made on better paper or of a different size, let me know and you shall have what you want.

Men go through Africa with their eyes shut to this particular wealth. They record that natives make all their simple tools, but they stop without further inquiry, because there is not an opened up mine in the whole of Central Africa, not even a pit dug to give the traveller cause for inquiring its purpose. All as far as I know, is got from the surface ore. But to give you some idea of the general abundance of ore—a man who knows the country well, and has been there five years told me three weeks ago that he could make the iron posts of a telegraph line in Central Africa if he got the order, and also that he could complete twelve hundred miles of line, having native-made posts of iron in two years. Such is his opinion of native work men and native ore.

He may have some specimens. Please ask him — Holmwood, H B M Consul for Zanzibar, The Albany, Piccadilly. Use my name.

He has a fine collection of native made spears and knives, and takes interest in iron, gold and ivory works.

Believe me, with a lively recollection of your hospitality in 1863,—yours very truly,

(Signed)

J A GRANT

MARINE HOTEL CAEN N B

## APPENDIX V

### THE PLACE OF KIKÚYU THOUGHT IN THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

THE statements regarding the religious thought and ceremonies of the Akakúyu, given in the text, are simply a record of field observations. Any estimation of their meaning, value, or bearing, was not only outside our province and capacity, but would also have been undesirable.

These garnered facts we submitted to Mr R. R. Marett, Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, with the request that he would be so good as to examine and weigh them. He has most kindly acceded, and in the following article shows wherein their interest lies from the standpoint of the comparative study of religions.

It should be added that Mr Marett attaches so much importance to the necessity of encouraging strict method in observation that he has declined to alter the remarks with which he prefaces his notes.

On the strength of but a hasty glance at some—not all—of the proof sheets containing the sections that relate to religion, magic, and folk lore, I should not venture, were I indeed otherwise competent, to pass judgment on the work of Mr and Mrs Routledge as it bears more specially on the comparative study of religions. Of this much, however, I can be sure on cursory inspection, that they have set forth their facts in the right way. In the first place, they are always careful to distinguish what they have observed with their own eyes from what has come by hearsay. If the Royal Anthro

pological Institute were to present a special decoration—as it <sup>will</sup> might do—to every traveller who obeyed this golden rule, the number of their awards in each year would, I am afraid, prove uncommonly small. Secondly, it is of a piece with this respect of theirs for the directly given that, when the authors have enjoyed more than one opportunity of watching a rite performed, or hearing a story told, they have preferred in making their report to incur the charge of repetition, rather than to concoct some generalised version, thereby concealing the divergencies that are almost certain to have occurred. These divergencies, small and unessential as they may appear to the uninitiated, tell a tale of which the psychologist would fain lose no single syllable. The savage as compared with civilised man is doubtless the slave of social use and wont, handing on what he has received with little or no conscious effort to modify and improve. Nevertheless, primitive custom is subject to a more or less steady drift, and the causes of this drift lie partly in an individual reaction upon tradition which, I feel certain, might be illustrated abundantly by workers in the field, would they but set down genuine particulars in their note books instead of pseudo universals. Thirdly, let me commend the practice of furnishing the name and, so to speak, the address of native informants whenever possible. I have personally met with cases in which others were by this means led to seek and obtain all important material for checking and revising the statements of the original observer. But enough concerning method. If I venture to praise the authors for the care they display in this respect it is with the practical object of inducing others to follow their example.

The problems that beset the comparative study of religions are so many and complex, that it would take a bold man to say which of them, in virtue of their fundamental character, are entitled to logical precedence over the rest. Anyone, however, who approaches the subject from the psychological side, will be inclined, I think, to agree that, in respect of primary interest and significance, two questions stand out by themselves. The first of these questions is, whether the animism of Dr Tylor provides an all sufficient account of primitive religion? The second is, whether primitive religion and primitive magic have something, or nothing in common? I cannot refrain from considering very briefly what Mr and Mrs Routledge have to say in regard to these cardinal issues.

A sort of three cornered fight is being waged at the present

moment between animism—the ghost-theory of religion, as one might compendiously term it—and two adversaries, neither of whom claims any more than a portion of the territory which the Tylorian doctrine is prepared to sweep into its net entire. The one adversary is Mr. Lang's contention that some gods neither now are, nor at any previous time in their history have been, conceived as ghost-like beings, but from first to last wear the character of "magnified non natural men." This view may be named "anthropomorphic theism." The other adversary is known on the Continent as "dynamism," but in this country has managed to exist so far without any distinctive title, unless it be that of "the pre animistic theory." This hypothesis supposes that the objects of religious and magico religious interest are always primarily powers. Here is something more than ordinarily powerful, which therefore ought to be treated with respect—that is the root idea. Now since the idea in question applies pre eminently to a ghost, or again to a Medicine Man, especially when apotheosised, it is very likely that powers originally dissimilar, for example an uncanny animal, or a lucky stone, or the thunderstorm that makes things grow, will in time be assimilated to one or the other of these two types. But (if the hypothesis be sound) there is no necessity that they should be so conceived. The power may be thought of as just the concrete agency—this mysterious animal, this lucky stone, or else, more abstractly, as the mystery in the animal, the luck in the stone, that is, as a more or less independent, because transmissible, force.

How, then, do the facts collected by Mr and Mrs Routledge help us to adjudicate between these rival theories? It must be confessed that, on the surface at all events, they appear to strengthen the case for animism. The *N'gô ma* of the Akikuyu is a typical *ánima* (not *ánimus*, the equivalent of which is the *N'gor o*). It is like the wind, being invisible and making a whirring sound. A dead man's *N'gô ma* may temporarily enter a living man, just as your breath passes out of your body, so it may pass into mine. Here is a convenient method of explaining disease, though, be it noted, disease starts by being mysterious and portentous on its own account. I have a bad night because my father's spirit, being in need of an offering of fat, puts a strain on my filial affection by taking possession of me. This possession theory is not unnaturally extended to the case of the *Ta tu* caterpillar, for it comes into the house, just as a deceased relation might wish to do. Then we pass on, with ever more strain

upon the ghost theory, to the cases of the hyena, the kite, the mongoose, the sacred *Mu gu mu* tree, and the elephant's skull. We may suspect originally independent powers to have been reconstrued in terms of ghost—human ghost, too, it would appear, though it was more natural to have supposed the elephant's skull to serve as a home for an elephant's ghost. The instance of the mongoose is especially instructive. We detect animism in the very act of supervening on the pre animistic. Some native theologians assert that the mongoose contains a spirit, but others hold that it does not, but means instead "good luck." The snake, meanwhile, would seem to be simply unlucky. *N'goma* is no longer in question at all. The uncanny beast can spoil your projected journey none the less. Call it religion, or call it mere superstition, you must find room for this class of fact in one and the same theoretic context with the facts about *N'goma*. To draw the line above the former and below the latter would be arbitrary in the extreme. Mr and Mrs Routledge were led by a sound instinct when they made one group of these animistic and non animistic beliefs.

Let us pass from the lower to the upper end of the scale, and consider *N'gai*, or *Eng Ai*, as Mr Hollis would have us write it. So far, at any rate, as the name goes, this Supreme Being has been borrowed from the Masai. With them he would seem to be nowadays at any rate, just the sort of 'magnified non natural man' that Mr Lang is in search of, though let us not forget that the word *Eng Ai* simply means "The Rain." However this is hardly the place in which to consider the Masai prototype. The Kikuyu ectype would seem to have been assimilated to the *N'goma* pattern, in so far as he is likewise said to be invisible. Meanwhile, it appears that not only the rain but also the sun, the moon and the lightning are "in a sense worshipped." I understand from the authors that they do not wish this general statement to be pressed as it rests on scattered indications which stand in need of further verification. It is better, then to take note in this connection of particular facts such as firstly, that the Medicine Man prays for aid indifferently to *N'gai*, to the sun or to Mount Kénia and explains (possibly in answer to a leading question) that it is 'all the same thing', secondly, that *N'gai* is "localised" on another mountain as well as on Kenya and in sacred trees besides. Here it is possible to discern what Max Muller would have termed a "henotheistic" process, the individual traits of various beings capable of possessing a godhead of their own—as the sun for instance, does amongst the Nandi—passing by absorption into the supereminent personality of the rain god of the

Yet it is perhaps more probable that *N'gai* has lost most of his personality in being transferred from one people to another, and has become a vague term for whatever is mystically potent—for the sacredness of a sacred tree, for instance. Let us not forget the statement of Joseph Thomson (*Masai Land*, 445), that even the Masai could speak of Thomson himself, of his lamp, and so on, as *N'gai*, in virtue of their strangeness and incomprehensibility. After hearing from Mr. Holles that he had himself come across nothing of the kind among the Masai, I was disposed to think that Thomson had simply misunderstood what was said to him (cf. *The Threshold of Religion*, xviii). The Akikuyu evidence, however, makes me doubt whether, after all, the anthropomorphic character of *N'gai* might not, with the less theologically minded, at all events, become lost in vagueness, so far as to allow a merely generic sense to attach to the term. "All the same thing," as quoted by Mr. and Mrs. Routledge, may possibly indicate synthesis, but it is just as likely—perhaps more likely—to indicate confusion. It may be worth while to recall here that Mr. H. R. Tate, in *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.*, xxxiv, 263, speaks of no less than three gods—two good and one bad—to whom the Akikuyu give the name of *N'gai*, though, to judge by his brief account, they are definite deities with highly specialised functions.

I have said so much about the first problem on which the new facts are likely to shed light, that I must be very brief regarding the second, namely, the question of the relation of religion to magic. One thing, I think, comes out very clearly in the Kikuyu evidence. The medicine man is not cut off by his profession from dealings with *N'gai*, but, on the contrary, is essentially a "Man of God" (*Mũn du mũ gu* where *mũ gu* has probably much the same sense as the Polynesian *mana*, namely, supernatural power or "virtue"). Nor can it be argued that here we have but the survivals of a former "Age of Magic," which are being rapidly obliterated by the development of religion, with its prayer and sacrifice directed towards a personal God. On the contrary, magic as represented by the art of the Medicine Man, shows signs of gaining ground at the expense of that "State religion" to which belongs "the most solemn service, the sacrifice to *N'gai*." This nominally Supreme Being sends the Medicine Man his "call," gives him his powers and assists him to exercise them. This does not, however, prevent the Medicine Man from assuming that tone of autonomy which some regard as in itself enough to differentiate magic utterly and finally from anything that deserves the name of religion. "I



drive uncleanness away from this hearthstead," he can say, or "I have purged your sin", yet *N'gai* is, in theory, at the back of it all. So much is this the case, that his power derived from *N'gai* enables the Medicine Man to manufacture charms, not merely to protect from evil, but likewise to bring evil about. If we were to press this statement, we might even venture on the deduction that *o-ró-gi*, black magic, ultimately proceeds from *N'gai*. We may doubt, however, if the *Kikúyu* correlation of magic and religion would go so far as that. Power to curse as well as to bless may, indeed, be entrusted by *N'gai* to his human vice gerents to be used for such purposes as are approved by society. But when a man practises the genuine black magic, that is, the sin of witchcraft, he surely puts himself beyond the social pale, and is on a par with those "irregular practitioners" who, we are told, are poisoned. So far, then, as *N'gai* stands for religion, there is probably a non religious or even anti religious, since anti social magic, namely *o-ró-gi*. On the other hand, so long as the Medicine Man uses his power for social good that power is of *N'gai* or in other words has religious significance, despite the fact that it is essentially a power of constraint autonomously exerted. To make constraint or dependence on one's own will the mark of magic, and conciliation, or dependence on the will of God the mark of religion is thus to set up an arbitrary distinction, in place of that which corresponds naturally to native theory and practice. After all, our business as anthropologists is to find out how the *Akikúyu* think, not how they ought to think.

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5th November 1909

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# GLOSSARY

Ankle bell . . . . .	GIN-GI'-RI.
Anklet . . . . .	N'GU'-GU.
Ant-bear . . . . .	MA-HUN'-GU.
Anvil (stone) . . . . .	MU-HI'-GA.
Apron (ornamental) . . . . .	SI'-RA.
" (woman's) . . . . .	MWAN'-GO.
Armlet of ivory . . . . .	N'GO'-ZO.
" of brass wire . . . . .	KI-CHAN'-GO.
" of wire . . . . .	MU-LEN'-GA.
Bag for medicine . . . . .	MON'-DO.
Banana, a choice variety . . . . .	N'JU'-RU.
Band (embroidered, ornamental) . . . . .	KI-NI-A'-TA.
Bead, a rare form of . . . . .	MU-KU-NUN'-GU.
" a kind of . . . . .	MU-GA'-SI.
Beads made of a scented wood . . . . .	MU-HU'-TI.
Bee-box or hive . . . . .	MWA'-TU.
Beetle, a valued form of . . . . .	N'GI-RI'-A.
Bell for ankle . . . . .	GIN-GI'-RI.
Bellows used by blacksmith . . . . .	MU'-RA.
• .. (smith's), wooden slips closing mouth of . . . . .	MI-KUM-BA'-TI.
Bird-scare . . . . .	KE-HU-RU'-TA.
" Roma " . . . . .	LU-GI'-LI.
Born again, to be . . . . .	KO-CHI-A-RU'-O, KE'-RI.
" of a goat, to be . . . . .	KO-CHI-A-RU'-O M'BOR'-I.
Boy, n. . . . .	U'-TA.
Boy, big, uncircumcised . . . . .	KI'-HE.
" small . . . . .	KA'-HE.
Bracelet, part iron, part brass wire . . . . .	LU-GU'-CHI-O.
" whipped with fine wire . . . . .	MU-HUN'-I-O.
Brass, the metal . . . . .	KI-CHAN'-GO.
Bull-roarer . . . . .	KE-HU-RU'-TA.
Cape of man, cloak of woman . . . . .	N'GU'-O.
Caterpillar . . . . .	TA'-TU.
Cattle boma . . . . .	KY-U'-GO.
Chain, n. . . . .	KI-LEN-GI'-RI.
" a form of . . . . .	MU-I-NOR'-O.

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Chain, loose links of	GA ZI' KA
Charcoal	MA KA' RA
Chest or thorax	N'GOR'-I O
Chew (bark) to	KU TA NU' KA
Clamp, wire-drawer's (complete)	RU' GA
"    "    name of part	RO' GA
"    "    "    "	KE RA' SI
"    "    "    "	NGO' ME
Claws	MA HUN' GU.
Clay, a bar of	MUN' DU A
Collar worn by boys	NGI' LA
Collarette, n	I KEV I' A
Copper, n	MI NI A' KA
Counter in lot casting	MBE' GU
Crowbar, n	MU GA RU' RU
Crucible (hole in ground, lined earthenware, for smelting iron)	I LI' MA
Curse, special dying	KI RU' ME
Dance, a form of, by women	N'DU' MO
"    by boys	N GOI' I SA
"    by boys only	KE ROI' I A
"    by men and women together	KE CHU' KI A
"    "    "    "	KEO NA' NO
"    "    "    "	KU I NE NE' RA
"    "    "    "	MU GOI' O
"    by warriors only	N'DI RI
"    "    "	KI BA' TA
"    by women	GE TI' RO
"    prior to circumcision	MAM BU' RA
Dish, n	KI HU LI
Dress of men part of d of women	N'GU' O
"    part of woman's	MU ZU' RU
"    "    "	MIWAN'-GO
Drinking horn	LU' HI ER.
Ear cylinder	MU' TI WA GU' TU.
, ornament	MI IN' DO
"    "    formed by spiral of wire	GO SO BEI' I
"    "    like a stick	HU LA HU' LI
"    "    made of grass stem	CHU' MA
worn in cartilage	MU NI E' KI
"    "    worn in lobe	KE CHU' I
"    "    worn in lobe	KI LIY GI' TI
"    the cartilage of the	DU GE' RA
"    the lobe of the	GU' TU
quill	RON I-OR' I
Ear rings for expanding the ears	NDE BE
Elder, n	KI A' MA
"    first step	MO RAY'-JA
Expel, n.	KO TI NI KI' A
Exorcism by a Medicine Man	TA NI KA' NI A

Centre	LU-GI' LI
Fire-ring	KI CHU' HI
Five sticks, the upper	U LIN' Y'
" the lower	JE KI
Garter	MU THAN'-GA.
" or knee band (wide)	MI CHI' VO
Girdle worn by boys dancing prior to circumcision ceremony	THI' KA
Girl, viz. no' yet circumcised	HI BI'-GU
" but, on having undergone circumcision	KA ER'-GO
" little	MOI ER' TU
Glass paper (natural)	MU KU'-O
God	NGAI', ceremonially MWI WE NYA'-GA (i.e. possessor of whiteness)
Gourd, a form of	MBOO' THU.
" dish	KI HU' LI
" for lot-casting	MWA' VO
Granary	I KUM BI (p' MA)
Gauge, wire-drawer's	U' TA.
Hammer, n	KE LI' HI
Head band fringe	MU I YON' O
Head-dress, special, worn by boys prior to circumcision ceremony	MU HI' RO
Hive or bee box	MWA' TU
Hole	I LI' MA
Horn, drinking	LU' HI ER
Hut, special temporary circumcision	KI KAN' DA
Iron ore	MU SAN' GA
" the metal, pig of iron	KI KA' MA
" wire	MU REN'-GA or MU RIN'-GA
Kenya, Mount	KI RE NYA' GA
Knife, a form of	KA' HI YU
Lead	KI HE.
Lead, the metal	GO SO REI' I
Leg ornament	MU THAN' GA
Lever, n	MU GA BU' BU
Lot bottle	MWA' VO
Mallet, wire-drawer's	JU GU' MA
Man, n (young warrior)	MWA NA' KE
" of middle age	MI ZUR' I
Medicine Man	MUN' DU MU' GU
	CHUM' BE (compounded)
	GOV' DU
	IR A
	KA GU' MO
	KAN U GU
	KI HO HO (from plant KI HIN GA)
Medicines	

Medicines (*continued*)

Mole

Mole trap

Necklace

" a form of  
 " child's  
 " form of  
 of copper  
 of plaited string  
 form of

Neck ornament

boy's

Nozzle (wooden) of bellows used by  
 smiths  
 (earthenware) of smiths  
 bellows

Opening

Ore of iron

Ornament boy's

in metal  
 of uncircumcised boys  
 of uncircumcised boys  
 only  
 small triangular  
 worn diagonally across  
 body  
 worn on upper arm or  
 below knee by men  
 only

Paint (colour unknown)

red

white

Palsade

Peel bark, to

Platter n

Poison

Poisoner n

Pound for cattle

Pot to hold toilet grease

KIN OR I A

LU SU KO (from plant MU HU KU RA)

O MU (from plant MTAN DA)

MU CHAN JA MU KA

MU KO SHO

MU KU RU LA

MU KU LU

MU RU RI

MWI TI A

NGON DU

RU SU KU Cf LU SU KO

SI AR I

U THEN GI

U MU

HU KO

KI HEM BE

LU LI GI

MA LI LI CHU A

MA LI GI RI GI

MANG OI O

MUI NA KA

N O O

MA LI LI CHU A

MU HI NI O

KI BAN DI

MER U KI

GER U A

I LI MA

MU SAN GA

KI BAN DI

BU GI

N'GI TA

MA REI ME LI

N'GI RI

GU GU TO

KI N OVA TA

M'BU RU

SA SI

MUN I O

LU GI LI

KU NOR A

KI TA BU BU

U RO GI

MRO GI

KY U GQ

DI GI SU



Rainbow, n	Mo' KU'-GA WA MBU' EA.
Rank, high official, old man	KI A MA
" lowest official	MO EAY'-JA
" lowest official, local	NDU'-DU
" official executive.	NJA' MA.
Ring for finger	KI-CHU'-HI
Roll (twine), to	KU'-O-OO' SI.
Rush, used for making beads	KI EA' GO
Sand, winnowed	LI LU' EA.
bandpaper (natural)	MO KU'-O
Satchel for medicine	MOY' DO
Seed, n	MBE'-GU.
Shell disc	I KEN' I I.
Shield for dancing	N'DO' ME.
" for dancing, ornamental band of	JA' VO YA N'DO'-ME
" the war	NGA' O
Skirt of woman	MU' ZU' RU
Slag in iron smelting	I GA'-GA
Slung, n	KI-OU' THA.
Snake worship	I TWI' KA
Snuff bottle	KI LAN'-GI KI AM BA' KI.
Soul, the, in life	'NOON'-O
Spear, n	M'KU' VI
" the upper or stabbing portion of a, the blade	I TI' MU
" the lower half or butt of a	MO' RA
" the wooden grip or union in middle of shaft of a	MU' TI
Spirit, the	NGO' MA
Spring of a mole trap	MU' ZI RU
Stake or crowbar, n	MU'-GA RU' RU
Stick of dancing boy	N'DOR OO' SI
Stockade, n (around the homestead)	LU'-GI' LI
" n (for cattle)	KY U' GO
Stone, n	I HI' GA
Story	PO GA' VO
Sword, n	RO HI YO
Tale, n	RO GA' VO.
Tendon, n	RO GA
Tongs used by blacksmith	MI HA' TO
Tool, a wire-drawer's	MU KU' HA
Tray, n	KI TA RU' RU
Trees, Shrubs, and Plants, varieties of (for edible plants, see Art Food and Cookery —	
CHU CHU	} Used in sacrifice
KA GU' MO	
HA GU' TU	
KAN U' GU	

## Trees etc (continued)—

KI HIN GA

KI RA GO

MA LI LI CHUA

MA TU RA N'GU RU

MLI GA RI

MON DU A

MON DU E

MTAN DA MBO GO Cf O MU

MU CHAN JA MU I A

MU CHA SA

MU CHU GU

MU GI O

MU GU MU

MU HO TI

MU HU KU RA

MU I GOI A

MU IM BAI N'GU RU

MU KE O

MU KOI' I GO

MU KO SHO

MU KUN GU GU

MU KU O

MU KU RU KA

MU KU YU

MU LI KA

MU LIQ' DA N'GU RU E

MU LIN DI KI

MU NDER EN DU

MU RE VU

MU REN GA

MU RU RI

MU TA ZI

MU TE I

MU THA QUA

MU TI GI

MWI TI A

N GON DU

NI U GU -O

RU GU' TU

Used in sacrifice

Used for beads

Scented leaves

Used for official handkerchief Cf

Ki a ma

Used in ceremonial Cf art Medi-  
cine Man

Used for string making

Used for string making

Medicinal

Medicinal

Vernonia Sp used for firemaking

Used for firemaking

Used for string making

Sacred Used for string making

Used for beads Blossom scarlet

Medicinal

Used in firemaking

Used in sacrifice

Used for string making

Used for charcoal

Medicinal

Used for traps

Used as sandpaper

Medicinal

Used in sacrifice

Used in firemaking

Used for string making

Used in firemaking

Staff of Kiama made from

Used in firemaking

Used in firemaking

Medicinal

Staff of Kiama made from

Used in firemaking and sacrifice

Used in sacrifice

Staff of Kiama made from,

Medicinal

Medicinal

Used in firemaking

Used in firemaking

## Uncleanness ceremon al

Vice part of a

Vomit n

Vulture

Waist belt fringed

ornament of women

Winnowing the action of

Wire n

THA HU

KE RA SI

TA HI KA

HO TA HI KA

N DE RI

MU I NOR O

SI RA

NEV GU NY HA

LU GU CHI O

Wire, to draw	KU-CU' CHI A.
" <i>LEE</i>	NJU' A C
Wire-drawer's clamp, part of	KZ KU' SI
Witchcraft	U KU' GI
Wizard, w	MZU' C'
Woman, young, betrothed	ME HU' XI
" <i>married</i>	MWA SA HU' KE
" <i>middle aged</i>	ME TI HU' A

AI TWI' KA	A religious cult Snake worship
BU-GI	Ornament in metal Catt's bell
CHEN' NE	A compounded medicine
CHO CHO	Plant used in sacrifice
CHU MA	Stick like ornament worn in cartilage of ear
GA ZI' KA	Loose links of chain
GE TI' RO	Dance performed by women
GIN-GI PI	Small reniform bells worn around ankle
GO SO REI' I	A tab of lead worn in the lobe of the ear The metal lead
GON' DU	A medicine
GU GU TO	Ornamental band worn diagonally across body at circumcision dance
GU TU (p' Ma)	The lobe of the ear
HU KO	A small burrowy animal, size of rat, that feeds on sweet potatoes
HU LA HU'-LI	Spiral of wire worn in cartilage of ear
HU RA HU' LI	Cf Hu la hu' li
I GAN GA	Slag in iron smelting
I HU'-GA (p' Ma HIG A)	A stone, an anvil Cf Mu hi' ga
I KEV I' A	Collarette worn by women
I KEN I I (p' Ma)	A disc of shell forming part of a breast ornament
I KUM BI (p' Ma)	A large thatched basket on legs forming a granary
I LI MA	Crucible (hole in ground, lined earthenware, for smelting iron)
I LI MA	A hole
I LI MA YA N DO ME	The central hole in a dancing shield
I LI MA YA N'GA RA	The arm hole of a dancing shield
IR' A	A medicine
I TI MU (p' Ma)	The blade of a spear
JE' KA	Lower fire stick

KA GU' MO	A medicine	Name of a tree
KA GU' TU	A form of tree (? Vernonia Sp)	Cf
KA' HEE	Ru gu tu	Cf. Fire
KA' HI YU	A small boy	
KAN U' OU	A form of knife	
KA RE' GO	Name of a tree used in medicine	
KE BOY I A	A little girl	
KE CHU' I	A dance by boys only	
KE CHU' KI A	A ring ornament of the ear lobe	
	Popular social dance of men and women together	
KE HU RU' TA	A bull roarer	
KE LI' NA	A hammer	
KE O NA' VO	A dance by men and women together	
KE RA' SI	Name of part of wire drawer's clamp	
KI A' MA	An elder	
KI BAN DI	A boy's neck ornament	
KI BA' TA	Spectacular dance by warriors only	
KI CHAN GO, n	Brass (1) the metal, (2) armlet of, (3) earrings of	
HI CHU' HI	A spiral of fine wire forming ring for finger	
KI GU' THA	A slint	
KI' HEE (pl I' HEE)	A big boy uncircumcised	
KI HEM' BE	A mole trap	
KI HIN' GA	Name of a tree used in medicine	
KI HO' HO	Medicine made from ashes of the hi hin ga tree	
KI HU' LI	Half gourds used as dishes	
KI KA' MA	Iron, the metal	A pig of iron
KI KAN' DA	A temporary hut occupied by youths after circumcision	
KI LAN' GI KYA AM BA' KI	Snuff bottle	
KI LET' GE' RI	Chain n (fine iron)	
KI LIN' GI' TI	Ornament worn in lobe of ear	
KI N'GNA TA	An ornament worn on upper arm or leg of men only	
KI NI A TA	Embroidered band	
KIN-OR' I A	A medicine	
KI RA' GO	A scented rush, of which the root is made into beads	
KI RE' NA GA	Mount Kenya	
KI RI GU	A big girl not yet circumcised	
KI RU' ME	A dying curse invoked by a father for disobedience	
KI TA RU' RU	A large platter	
KO CHI A RE I RU O M BOR I	' To be born of a goat '	
KO-CHI A RU' O KE' RI	To be born again	
KO-TA HI KA r	To vomit	
KO TA HI RI' A (causative)	To expel	
KU GU CHU' A	To draw wire, lit to draw	
KU I VE VE RA	A dance by warriors and young women together	

KU-YOZ'-A	To peel bark.
KI-O-CO'-SA	To roll (twine)
KU-TA KU'-KA	To chew (bark)
KY U'-GO	a growing stockade
LI UY'-BA	Winnowed sand.
LU-GI'-LI	Stockade encloses every Kikuyu homestead
LU GU'-CHI-O	Bracelet—iron wire edged with bears wire Wire
LC'-HI ER	Drinking horn
LU LI'-GI	Necklace
LU SU'-KO	A medicine made from Mu hu. Lu'ra tree Cf Ru su'-ko.
MA HU'-GU	Claws of the ant bear Cf Si ra.
MA KA'-RA	Charcoal for blacksmith's work.
MA LI GI RI'-GI	A little girl's necklace
MA LI LI'-CHU'-A	A scented plant, also necklaces made from its leaves
MAM DU' RA	The dance or festival of circumcision.
MANG OI'-O	A form of necklace
MA REI ME'-LI	An ornament worn by uncircumcised boys only
MA-TU RA NGU'-RU	Shrub of whose herbage Ksima's handkerchief is made
MRE'-GU	Counters in lot casting Seed
MBOO'-THU	A form of gourd
MBU' PU	Name of a pigment
MER U'-KI	Nozzle (wooden) of bellows used by smiths
MI HA'-TO	Tongs used by blacksmith
MI IN' DO	An ornament worn in lobe of ear
MI KUM BA TI	Bellows (smith's) Wooden slips closing mouth of
MLI GA'-RI	A tree used in initiation of Medicine-Man
MOI-RE' TU (pl. AI)	A big girl, when circumcision has been undergone
MON'-DO	A bag A Medicine-Man's bag A satchel containing medicine
MOND' U-A, n.	Name of a fibre plant
MON DU'-Z	Plant Arbutus Sp Cf String
MO' RA	The lowest of the three parts of which a spear consists
MO BAN'-JA	Lowest official rank.
MO'RO'-OI	Wizard Poisoner
MITAN'-DA MBO GO	Name of a medicinal plant. Cf O'-mu
MU-CHAN-JA MU'-KA	A medicine Name of a tree
MU CHA' SA	Plant Vernonia Sp. Cf Tire
MU CHI NO	A wide knee band
MU CHU'-GU	Plant Cf Tire
MU GA RU' RU	A crowbar.

- MU-GA NI  
 MU I C  
 MU O I O  
 MU-ET MO  
 MU HI-4 A  
 MU I I KI  
 MU HI NI O  
 MU HI TO  
 MU H YI  
 MU HI KU RA  
 MU HX I O  
 MU I I A  
 MU IM HAI NI HI  
 MU I MOR O  
 MU KE O  
 MU K I I O  
 MU KO S IO  
 MU KI HA  
 MU KI KI N (jd Mi)  
 MU KUN GA WA MU NI  
 MU KUN-OF-OF  
 MU KI NUN IL  
 MU KL O  
 MU KI NI KA  
 MU KU YL  
 MU IEN-GA  
 MU LI KA  
 MU LIN DA NGU RU E  
 MU LIN DI KI  
 MU NDER EN DU  
 MU N DU A  
 MU N DU MU OU A  
 MU NI A KA N  
 MU NI E KI  
 MU N IO  
 MU RA  
 MU REN O A  
 MU RE VU  
 A kind of leaf bark tree  
 Part of string also in a it are  
 made large trays Cf p 14  
 (1) A small dance (2) a 3 and  
 4 (3) the ph 7 rap  
 The sacred tree of hikuyu Cf  
 1 ring  
 (1) a (2) ones  
 A young man when he is called  
 ahead the utilian iler  
 A rock on a hill  
 A head-dress worn by boys prior to  
 ceremony of circumcision  
 A rat tree with a small house  
 Wood made into beads  
 Name of a tree used in medicine  
 Bracelet whipped with iron wire  
 A plant Cf 1 re  
 A plant used at sacrifice  
 A form of chains applied to head  
 and waist bands  
 Plant Cf String  
 Bred a m crantha Mull Arg  
 Cf Iron Smelting  
 Amed ne Name of a tree  
 A wire-drawer's tool  
 Spear  
 Rainbow  
 The name of the tree of which the  
 trap ki lem be is made  
 A rare form of pale green beetle  
 A tree of which the leaves form a  
 natural glass paper  
 A medicine Name of a tree  
 A medicine Name of a tree  
 Plant used in sacrifice  
 Armlet of iron wire  
 Plant (Vernonia Sp) Cf Fire  
 Plant Cf Strag  
 Plant Cf Fire  
 One of three woods from which  
 may be made hiama's staff of  
 office  
 A bar of clay ready to be worked.  
 A Medicine Man  
 Copper  
 Grass stem worn in cart lags of  
 ears  
 A white pigment used for painting  
 dancing shields  
 Bellows used by blacksmith  
 Iron wire  
 Plant Cf Fire

MC EIN'-GA . . . . .	Iron wire
MC RIV'-GA . . . . .	Plant Cf Fire
MC RU RI . . . . .	A medicine Name of a tree
MC SAN' GA . . . . .	Washed iron ore sand, ready for smelting
MC TA' ZI . . . . .	One of three woods from which the staff of a Kiama may be made
MC-THAN-GA . . . . .	An ornamental band worn around the upper part of the calf of leg
MU THA' QUA . . . . .	A plant used in sacrifice
MU TE' I . . . . .	Plant (? Vernonia Sp) Cf Fire Cf Sacrifice
MU' TI . . . . .	The wooden junction or grasp of the two iron halves of a spear
MU TI' GI . . . . .	One of three woods from which may be made elder's staff of office
MU-TI MI' A . . . . .	A woman when one of her children has been circumcised, i.e. middle-aged
MU' TI WA GU'-TU . . . . .	Cylinder of wood worn in the ear
MU ZI' RU . . . . .	(1) Elastic wand forming spring of trap hi hem' be, (2) a barrel to store honey (not hive), a box
MU ZU' RU . . . . .	A woman's skirt
MWA YA' KE . . . . .	A young man who has been circumcised A warrior
MWA YA MU' KE . . . . .	A young woman on becoming pregnant, with a house of her own
MWAN' OO . . . . .	An apron
MWA' YO . . . . .	Lot gourd
MWA' TU . . . . .	A form of bee hive placed in trees
MWI YE NYA' GA . . . . .	Ceremonial name for God
MWI' TI A . . . . .	A medicine Name of a tree
M'ZUR' I . . . . .	The father of a circumcised child
M'ZUR' I A BOU' I . . . . .	A tottering white headed old man
M'ZUR' I A KI A YA . . . . .	Man of late middlelife needing a stick
NDE BE . . . . .	Rings for expanding the lobes of the ear
N'DER' I, n . . . . .	A vulture
N'DI GI SU, sing and, pl' . . . . .	A small earthenware pot to hold grease for personal adornment
N'DI RI . . . . .	A dance by warriors only
N'DO ME . . . . .	An ornamental shield worn on the shoulder when dancing
N'DQR OO' SI . . . . .	A wand carried by each boy when dancing prior to circumcision ceremony
N'DU-GE RA . . . . .	The cartilage of the ear
N DU' MO . . . . .	A dance performed by women only
N'DUN DU . . . . .	Lowest official rank in Karuri's district
NEN GU HU' HA . . . . .	The action of winnowing

N'GA'-O	.	.	.	.	A shield used in war.
N'GER-U'-A	.	.	.	.	Norale (earthenware) of smith's bellows.
N'GI'-MI	.	.	.	.	A small triangular ornament made of bone.
N'GI-NI'-A	.	.	.	.	Azara beetle ( <i>Megasoma Glabripennis</i> Kollar).
N'GI'-TA	.	.	.	.	Collar worn by boys.
N'GON'-O	.	.	.	.	A pleated fibre necklace.
N'GO'-I-NA	.	.	.	.	A dance by boys.
N'GO'-MA	.	.	.	.	The spirit.
N'GO'-ME	.	.	.	.	Name of a part of wire-drawer's clamp.
N'GON-DE	.	.	.	.	A medicine. Name of a tree.
N'GOR'-I-O	.	.	.	.	The chest or thorax.
N'GON'-O	.	.	.	.	The soul in life.
N'GO'-THO	.	.	.	.	An ivory armlet worn by men only.
N'GO'-RO	.	.	.	.	An ivory armlet worn by men only.
N'GU'-GU	.	.	.	.	Anklet of copper wire.
N'GU'-O	.	.	.	.	The only garment worn by males.
NI-T-GU'-O	.	.	.	.	Upper garment of females.
N'JA-NO YA N'DO-ME	.	.	.	.	A form of tree. Cf. Fire.
N'JU'-GU	.	.	.	.	Bermed bands on inner aspect of dancing shield.
N'JU'-GU-MA	.	.	.	.	Fine wire used to make Mi-chi'-no.
N'JU'-RU	.	.	.	.	A wooden mallet used by wire-drawer. Club.
N'OI'-O	.	.	.	.	A kind of banana that is ripened in a jar.
O'-ME	.	.	.	.	Necklace of pleated string.
RO'-GA	.	.	.	.	Medicine made from roots of a tree called Mitan'-da Mbo-go.
RO-GA'-NO (pl. N'GA-NO)	.	.	.	.	A tendon; also name of a part of the wire-drawer's clamp.
RO'-HIYO (pl. HI-YO)	.	.	.	.	Folk tales.
ROX-I-OR'-I (pl. NY-OR'-I)	.	.	.	.	A sword.
RU'-GA	.	.	.	.	Ear quills.
RU-OU'-TU	.	.	.	.	The wire-drawer's clamp.
RU-SU'-KU	.	.	.	.	A form of tree (? <i>Vernonia</i> Sp.). Cf. Ka-gu-tu. Cf. Fire.
SA'-SI	.	.	.	.	A medicine.
SI-AR'-I	.	.	.	.	A red pigment. Soup, broth.
SI'-RA	.	.	.	.	A medicine made from the ash of the feathers of the rhinoceros bird.
TA-HI'-KA, R.	.	.	.	.	Ornamented apron; two worn: one in front; one behind, by women only.
	.	.	.	.	Vomit.



TA-NI-KA'-NI-A	.	.	.	.	The expulsion of evil by a Medicine-Man.
TA'-TU	.	.	.	.	Species of caterpillar.
THA'-HU	.	.	.	.	Ceremonial uncleanness. Illness resulting from ceremonial uncleanness.
THI'-RA	.	.	.	.	Girdle worn by boys dancing prior to circumcision ceremony.
U-LIX'-DI	.	.	.	.	Upper fire stick.
U'-MU	.	.	.	.	A medicine.
U-RO'-GI	.	.	.	.	Witchcraft. Poison.
U'-TA	.	.	.	.	A bow. A wire-drawer's tool.
U-THEN'-GI	.	.	.	.	A medicine.

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